

Early Recovery from Addiction

What I Would Tell Myself if I Could Go Back

SIMPLY SOBER

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A special thanks to my wife,  
my bright moon in the dark night.



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## NOTE TO THE READER

We encounter many unknowns when we begin big changes in the way we manage our daily lives and the emotions that come along with the shift. With these unknowns comes fear and uncomfortable situations we must learn how to face sooner rather than later. Let's try to shine some light on what we may be undertaking when we shed a behavior such as an addiction and learn some tricks along the way to get us through the process with fewer surprises and frustrations.

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## CHAPTER 1

### I'll Take it Shaking ... and Stirred

*Before the sea of chaos reached my lips, I added the final ingredient. A tear from my insanity.*

*- Yours Truly*

#### Time Period: Pre-Recovery, Still Drunk

*Most of the people who know me would say I drink a lot, but they have no fucking clue. I don't drink a lot; I drink it all. For instance, this liter of vodka that sits in front of me right now. I bought it this morning when the liquor store opened its doors. It's already half empty. It's only two o'clock in the afternoon. I'll need to get more soon.*

*It wasn't always this way—unbearable would be the proper term. There was a time when it appeared as if I was just doing the same as everyone else my age. Did I see the escalation, the increased side-effects, the increased harm? Yeah, I did. But it always seemed like a good idea anyway . . . it somehow always seems like a good idea.*

*I can still recall my first mild case of the “shaky jakes”. I didn't*

*know what it was at the time. I didn't understand why I was so nervous, why my heart was racing when I couldn't get the words out while telling my friends a fun story about the wild weekend I had, and why my hands would quiver when I used them a certain way. That was some time ago.*

*These days, if I put down the bottle and go cold turkey, I encounter something that I've come to call The Fear. If someone were to ask me how it feels, what would happen if I didn't have this bottle next to me, I would tell them to imagine themselves in the shallow end of a swimming pool holding their breath under water until they can't stand it anymore and break surface for air—that's how it feels when they need a drink. To know how I feel when I need one (hundred), they would need to take a splash in the deep end with their wrists bound by chains attached to a cinder block and the only way up is to chew off a hand. Morbid, I know, but nobody ever asks anyway.*

*The people who believe I only drink a lot don't get to see it. I usually hide somewhere when it comes, like a werewolf afraid to transform on a full moon. Only an unfortunate few have seen me go through it, the people who are closest, the few left who still care, the ones who won't give up even though I already have.*

*If I need to stop, I have to look forward to that mind-bending anxiety, jittery withdrawal and nerve-racking irritation that must be faced once the chemical comfort of the alcohol slowly leaves my system; the inability to stomach food, unless I tickle my liver with some liquor first; the gagging and shameful toilet scrubblings after vomiting out of both ends; the hiding beneath my blankets while movies repeat in the background of my room while I twitch and tremble and wait for the detox process to end. Then there's the blood pressure, the pure threat of seizing up with each pound of my heart, and the panic attacks where I'm*

*usually convinced I'm going to stroke-out when my hands and feet curl and cramp, my tongue swells, and I hyperventilate into a frenzy. Don't forget the displeasure of suffocating in my sleep—waking up from an apnea episode, almost grateful for the startled rescue from my demon-dancing nightmares.*

*Oh yeah, it's happened more than once in my drinking career. Sometimes, I run out of my supply and have no money or energy to hustle a fix. Occasionally, it happens after an arrest, when I need to shake it off in a jail cell. Sometimes I find myself at work with no maintenance shots to get me through the day—struggling to keep my nervous hands busy until the clock reaches quitting time, when I can jet to the liquor store, usually throwing up the first shot to untie the knot in my stomach.*

*Sometimes the booze just doesn't work anymore. Too sick from all the poison, my body will either reject it altogether, or the desired affect is no longer achievable. When this happens, most of the bottle is gone early (gotta save a little), and I pass out just before my nerves can reach that calm paradise, only to wake up to the same terror hours later and start over again. When it gets this bad, I usually suffer through the agonizing detox for a day or two to let my body repair itself and reboot, impatiently waiting in hiding until I can stomach the elixir again.*

*Did I mention the gremlin voice constantly clamoring inside my mind? He's almost always there, telling me a few drinks would make all the suffering go away, that a shot or two would make me all better. He repeats his nasty solution over and over like some sort of smooth-talking C.I.A. brainwashing technician.*

*Maybe sprinkle some anxiety from a legal issue on top of all that, like a DWI or an assault charge or an eviction notice. With the worries that come with such scenarios, and the negative prophecies running their laps in my mind . . . well let's just say*

*I'm already planning my next drink before you can drag me through the hospital doors.*

*It's all downright traumatic to go through. Even if I stop using with the intention of quitting for good, even if I have someone hide my car keys and wallet, I quickly find myself digging up holes in the backyard for a potential score of a previously stashed bottle.*

*The fear of this experience is my first obstacle to getting sober. This is my endless, unquenchable thirst. This is my hell.*

## Time Period: Present Day, and Sober

Sounds like we were a hardcore boozehound. If my memory serves me, it was up to about a liter of vodka per day—plus other miscellaneous party-favors when money was good. Yup, there's nothing like it: the ungodly torture of drying-out after being drunk for weeks, months, or maybe years.

These phenomena of withdrawal and cravings are impossible for most people to understand. Normal folk told us to, “just stop,” because they haven't experienced it. They've only endured wimpy little headache hangovers. Those *horrible* hangovers regular people get after consuming an *entire* six-pack on a Friday night, or maybe a couple-day bender over the weekend if they're ambitious. They've only experienced those hangovers that can be easily handled with a few ibuprofens, a large glass of water, and a nap.

The only way for the amateur, lightweight, Normy, or non-drinker to understand how it feels when an Alcoholic abruptly ceases heavy usage would be to drop them off in the middle of the Sahara Desert alone with no food, no water, no phone, and leave them there with no sign of rescue. After about a week they would begin to feel how a person who has become physically and mentally hooked on alcohol feels when they stop using.

But, like this concept of being lost in the desert, one can only guess that it really sucks. *They* can only speculate. It's still difficult to imagine the sensations unless they have literally experienced it, and I don't know many people who've been lost in the desert lately.

Ironically, this Sahara scenario is exactly what every cell in the Addict's body and brain screams at them when the drug is taken

away. The body and brain communicate back and forth signaling malnutrition, dehydration, exhaustion, toxicity, lack of oxygen, and that there's no one around to help.

In many cases, these points may be valid on some level, especially for someone who has hit a deep bottom, like the gutter-bum snuggled up with a blanket and a Listerine bottle beneath the highway overpass. But, if they are a heavy user, we could place that same Alcoholic in a mansion with an endless supply of water and a buffet full of food served to them on a king-size bed by bare-naked supermodels on roller-skates, and their physiology would still be signaling threats of death when the drug is taken away. We often see this happen with rich and famous people who seemingly have it all, then flush their lives down the toilet with continued use.

We can flip it both ways. Take that same Addict out of the mansion and put them back in a gutter puddle on the street where they have minimal shelter, food, sleep, and drinking water. For some reason they don't seem to mind these conditions—if their liquor bottle stayeth full.

The drug is telling a specific part of their brain that they have everything they need; they have all the essentials for survival—for as long as the supply lasts. But when the supply runs out, they're not looking for food or water or shelter, they're looking for the bottle—the quickest fix the brain has learned to solve the new survival problem.

Why is this so?

I'll start by saying an alcoholic is not addicted to alcohol. I can repeat that one for ya. An alcoholic is not physiologically addicted to alcohol. Alcoholics are not addicted to the substance alcohol. Confusing, yes?

Let me explain this alcohol thing before I get into the

addiction thing.

Here's a little crude science about how an Alcoholic's physiology differs from a Normy's. How we are different. It might be a good thing to know if you wish to solve your problem. (What? Nobody told you exactly how you process this popular potion differently than ninety percent of the people around you?)

When alcohol is consumed—by anyone, alcoholic or not—it obviously absorbs into the bloodstream, gives you a little buzz, and eventually reaches the liver where it's transformed into a chemical called acetaldehyde. Acetaldehyde is the poison part of the process, "pick your poison". In Alcoholics, this transformation is done at twice the normal rate versus a non-alcoholic system. Alcoholic metabolism equals double the speed of transformation from booze to poison.

Bear with me. It gets wicked cool.

Next, in both the Alcoholic and the Normy, the poison floats throughout the system and winds up back at the liver for a second round of conversion into a chemical called acetate (acetic acid). Acetate is the form that gets expelled from the body, the form which gets sweated, breathed, and pissed out. This little transformation happens rather quickly in a Normy, but an Alcoholic's system makes this conversion twice as slow.

Now, the Alcoholic has acetaldehyde being produced twice as fast (twice the poison) and converting that poison into the excretory form, acetate, twice as slow (the poison leaving the body at half the rate). This messed up ratio leaves a ton of excess acetaldehyde poison floating around in the bloodstream of Mr. Drinks A. Lot.

Here's the whopper.

When the excessive poison reaches the brain of an Alcoholic and passes through the blood-brain barrier (which was put there

to block most toxins from invading that precious, little brain of ours), the acetaldehyde starts to party and mingle and hookup with the neurotransmitters (those happy brain chemicals: serotonin, dopamine, GABA, and what have you). The poison hooks-up with the happy brain chemicals and they make a little devil baby, a compound called tetrahydroisoquinoline (T.H.I.Q.). We'll call it THIQ. Sounds like some good shit, huh? Well, it is. It's a potent, psychoactive compound that's damn near identical to opiates: high-powered painkillers, morphine, heroine, oxy, fentanyl, etc. A Normy cannot do this. There is no THIQ in the brain of a Normy.

As you can see, an alcoholic is not addicted to alcohol. What an alcoholic is addicted to is what they can turn alcohol into, THIQ, a high-powered narcotic painkiller.

Now you know why we liked it so much, and why the drink can be more of a reward for an Alcoholic than it is for a Normy. Like Jesus could turn water into wine, we can turn wine into a narcotic. When an Alcoholic has a beer (or twelve) it's not just an innocent refreshment like how the rest of the world views it. To an Alcoholic, it's the same as banging some heroin in the arm.

We get an entirely different high, an entirely superior **reward**. This is what everyone means when they say we have abnormal reaction to the substance, sometimes called an allergy.

Here is where it gets tricky.

Occasionally, you would sober up for a while, but then you experimented. You tried desperately to drink like normal folk. And when you did drink like normal folk, when you only had a couple drinks, you didn't experience the huge urges to keep going, or the insane cravings the next day. It seemed like it was under control—when you drank like normal folk.

The problem is, when people drink, they expect a certain



effect. You cannot achieve your desired effect with only a few drinks like normal folk can. The effect they seek is different than yours. Your brain cells require a certain amount of poison to open THIQ's gates. A couple isn't enough. It's just a tease. So eventually you get sick of the lap dance and ask for the real thing.

This is also why it's easier for alcoholics to graduate to the high-powered narcotic pain-killer addictions. Because they're the same.

Let's keep going.

When you do sober-up, one of the first things you will need to contend with are cravings. Despite multiple addiction treatments, doctor visits, county detoxes, books read, and shrink sessions: your understanding of what cravings are remained limited to, "It means I want it really bad because my brain chemistry is messed up." Not helpful.

I say, let's pull its pants down and look at what we're really working with.

A minute ago, I said the word reward. Well, the **reward**-center in our brain resides in the primitive portion. The "ooga-booga" caveman part, sometimes called the reptilian or survival brain (we will call it Scaredy Cat). It's the ancient part, from an evolutionary standpoint. This is the portion all animals have: lizards, lab rats, cats, birds, dogs, squirrels, and humans.

Its job is to monitor and regulate our essentials needed to survive. These include air, water, food, sleep, expulsion of toxins, and balanced chemistry. Scaredy Cat rewards us for each of these achieved. I don't need to tell you how amazing something like a good night's sleep feels. But then there's the opposite. Scaredy Cat will have a frickin shit-fit when it thinks that we don't have them.

The decision-making process becomes hijacked because the

drug gives us the same chemical rewards that Scaredy Cat would release if we had every survival-need entirely fulfilled, sometimes temporarily better. But, these fake, drug rewards are imposters, unnatural. We receive the reward whether we have achieved the survival essentials or not. Over time, Scaredy Cat gets used to the imposter reward's presence, and Scaredy Cat doesn't mind, it makes his job easier. The survival essential quotas are full when he monitors the system and sees the rewards are already there. No emergency. No fuss. Scaredy Cat can relax. He associates the drug with our survival. He equates the drug with oxygen, food, water, sleep, and so on. For as long as the drug is around, everything's cool.

This begs the question, what happens when the drug is taken away?

When our drug is taken away, or even when we think of it being taken away, Scaredy Cat literally thinks we are dying. It's why we get so irritated when someone dumps our bottle. If someone takes our stash it's a death threat, because when the drug's imposter-reward disappears, the survival essentials that Scaredy Cat associated with that reward disappear with it. The survival brain now thinks we have no water, no food, no sleep, no homeostasis, too many toxins, and no air.

When this happens, we get an emotional motivator called Fear, which can easily turn into anger. This emotion of fear was originally designed to motivate us to solve real survival problems, but now the quickest and most efficient way to solve the fake threat is with another dose of our favorite poison.

Sometimes this survival alarm is intense, and sometimes it can be much subtler, but this is the basic mechanism behind almost ALL cravings for anything. For this reason, I use the terms Alcoholic and Addict interchangeably. From video games, to

sugar, to meth, to alcohol, to gambling; it does not matter what the addiction stimulus is, the addictive substance (or behavior) lights up that caveman brain in one way or another. It's an exploitation of our primal programming.

It's also why Addicts tend to do crazy shit to get the drug. How many people would lie, cheat, steal, or perform a sickening sexual act with a total stranger if it meant surviving imminent death?

The parts of our brain that're evolutionarily newer, especially the prefrontal cortex (the higher-functioning, decision making, planning, sometimes called the executive part of our brain that we are more consciously aware of) may have an epiphany one day and say something like, "Look asshole, we need to stop. This shit is getting way out of hand."

But Scaredy Cat—sitting on top of our spine with a hardline to our entire nervous system—is much older and stronger. It fires off signals to the entire brain and body five times faster and more powerful than the (logical) prefrontal cortex (which we'll call Mr. Potato Head). Scaredy Cat has seniority over its younger, little brother, Mr. Potato Head brain, and yells, "Shut up bitch! We need to survive, and you only know one way to do it! So, you better do whatever it is that you do to solve this problem because I'm not going to shut up until I have what we need to live!"

Scaredy Cat has one purpose, and one purpose only, to keep us alive. Scaredy Cat is not only reflexive (as in immediate) but subconscious as well, totally beneath our awareness, making it difficult for Mr. Potato Head to discern where the emotional signal is coming from. Basically, all Scaredy Cat's narrative is in the language of emotion, and Mr. Potato head has no idea what Scaredy is bitching about but has learned a good way to shut him up.

Not only is the fear confusing, but Mr. Potato Head is also easily outwitted by this signal if he doesn't have the proper information, I just told you, because he was designed to accomplish what Scaredy Cat demands. That's how everyone is wired. It's how the brain was designed to accomplish goals like figuring out how to hunt animals to eat, make fire, find water, and build huts to stay alive. Scaredy Cat detects a need and Mr. Potato Head figures out how to get it done.

So, Mr. Potato Head says, "Alrighty then. I'll figure this out. A drink always works. I'll find us some money. I can find a way to the bar. I can swindle a fix. I can just sell . . . this! But I might need to lie to the other parts of our mind and ignore the moans of our body, because they all think we should probably stop too." Hence, the mechanism behind all the ways we justified our use despite harmful consequences. Also, why we think we're going insane when we know the outcome of the behavior will end horribly, but still can't stop.

Mr. Potato Head doesn't really know what Scaredy Cat wants, but he knows how to make Scaredy Cat purr. This is the hijacking of an Alcoholic's on/off switch. The switch which normal folks still have in place when consequences like hardcore hangovers or legal issues let them know the habit is getting out of control (regarding alcohol). They still maintain the ability to simply quit.

Why am I telling you all this stuff? How does it help? How can you use it? What does it mean for you?

It means that when you do finally quit you must deal with this ancient hardwired part of your brain telling the rest of your nervous system that your existence is in danger when it really is not.

This fear is unnecessary, imaginary, a total lie, a god damn

hornswoggle! The lie is that Scaredy Cat thinks you ran out of all your survival essentials, but you mostly likely have everything you need right in front of you.

You have air, water, food, your sleep will improve, and you have an entire physiology designed to snap back into shape if you quit abusing it like it's some sort of Monster Truck with an unlimited supply of parts.

Let me put it this way.

There are two forces at work when you dry-out. Mental cravings, and physical withdrawal. Cravings are nothing more than fear, False Evidence Appearing Real. Withdrawals are essentially the same as the Flu—the body has become overly toxic, way out of balance, and it's taking the proper measures to make it right. The body and mind are always trying to maintain a balance (remember that). But, of course, the recalibration feels nasty because the way the body does this is by puking, chills and fevers, shakin' up the nervous system, wringing the muscles, system-flushing diarrhea, and all sorts of other fun shit. But it's very temporary.

If Mr. Potato Head does not know the difference between the two, they amplify each other because Mr. Potato Head is receiving a death alarm from Scaredy Cat (separate from the withdrawal), but at the same time receiving physical evidences from the withdrawal sickness that seemingly proves Scaredy Cat's point.

Narration.

Scaredy Cat says, "Look man, something's not right. A few hours ago, all our system gauges were reading Gucci. Now they suddenly all dropped. The food-o-meter is sayin' we haven't eaten in days. The hydrometer says we're empty. The sleep-o-meter needle is in the red zone labelled psychosis. Toxin levels are

through the roof. And the homeostasis gauge just popped and cracked open!”

Mr. Potato Head attempts to use some reason. “Dude, we just ate some chicken nuggets earlier today. We’ve been chasing our vodka shots with Gatorade for the last three days. We were passed-out until, like, noon. And we’ve been pissin’ out toxins like crazy. We’re fine dude.”

But Scaredy Cat isn’t having any of it. “I’m tellin’ ya, man. Somethin’ ain’t right! You gotta fix this shit NOW, or we all gonna die!”

Then, over the course of a day or two, Mr. Potato Head feels it. “Dude look at my hands. They’re all shaky and shit. Why is my heart pounding so damn hard? I’m starving, but I don’t think I can hold anything down. So tired, but I can’t sleep. What the fuck is going on, dude? You were right. We’re fucking dying! AHHHHH! How do I fix it? How do I fix? . . . Booze! Booze always works. But don’t we feel like this because of the booze?”

“Just fucking drink it!” Scaredy screams.

Now everyone’s panicking and confused

You separate the two, the illusion of the mental craving for the drug (which Scaredy Cat believes is your survival-needs) from the physical withdrawal. You separate the two because they are rooted in different things yet influence each other. We know there’s a difference because cravings last much longer than withdrawals. You separate the two because they feed on each other if you don’t. The feeling of anxiety makes the physical withdrawal symptoms much worse, and the feel of the physical withdrawal feeds the illusion of the craving. This is what people mean when they tell you it’s all in your head, and to, “just calm down.”

If you were to look up both symptom lists for acute anxiety

and alcohol withdrawal, and compared them side-by-side, you would find they are almost identical. This means you can cut both the intense and subtle traumas of a Quit in half by knowing what the lie is, that most of it is not real, that you're not hopelessly cocoo for cocoa puffs. Think of the whole process as simply having the Flu.

Remember, your body only feels sick because it's doing what it's supposed to do, readjusting to what you did to it. It's getting better, not worse. All the anxiety and mysterious doom is coming from the scam Scaredy Cat had been victim to, the survival essentials hustle, and that you may need to catch up on few. That's it.

My point is, all the symptoms experienced during a quit can be lessened when you know where in the hell there coming from, and why it feels the way it does. It's scary not to know what's going on when you're sick. "Now you know, and knowing's half the battle."— G.I. Joe (old school).

After we learned this concept of separating the Craving's lies from the physical withdrawals, most of the confusion about our insanity (the desire to continue doing the exact same thing we knew was making us ill) disappeared. This new understanding didn't mean we stayed sober, but when we'd had enough and needed to dry-out, we realized most of what we were about to experience was imaginary. Scaredy Cat had been tricked, but now the jig is up.

The knowledge of this mental hack lessened the fear of the intense cravings that would inevitably come forward. Less fear of the cravings meant shorter benders because the binges were no longer extended by the Fear. Shorter benders meant less amounts of the drug, and less intense withdrawals and cravings the next

time we had to sober-up. Less intense physical withdrawals and mental cravings meant less traumatic recoveries, and milder cravings soon after.

The healing-work became more and more bearable, and we learned more and more tricks. Eventually, we would only relapse once every three or four months, sometimes a year, and those slips usually only lasted three to five days. But life still went on. Real-world responsibilities continued to build as we matured, until we couldn't afford to encounter even the small slips anymore.



## Tips, Tricks, and Hacks

First and foremost, I highly recommend participating in a hospital detoxification where you're supervised by medical staff, especially if you know you get bad withdrawals after a heavy bender. Not only is it much safer this way, but they also have cool drugs to help take the edge off some of the symptoms like anxiety and high blood pressure. Plus, you're more limited in access to your drug of choice when the impulses arise (and they will). Sneaking past nurses, getting out the door, finding a liquor store on foot, then figuring out how to get home is a bit of a deterrent.

Also, if you choose to accept any additional help, they have all the resources, and the ability to fast track the process of getting your ass into a treatment center to start the recovery phase. That's the place you want to be.

Don't go out with a bang. Usually, when you know ahead of time that you're about to undertake a detoxification, the anticipation of the upcoming change, or the thought of not being able to use for some time, ignites the bright idea to get super lit the night before. This makes the withdrawals all the worse, thus decreasing the chances of a successful detox by increasing the urges to use the drug again before the intense part is finished. If you want to make it easier on yourself, start to ween off the stuff a day or two before totally quitting. At least get the consumption down to half, but don't take longer than two days because your motivation will most likely dissolve.

Learn to breathe correctly. It sounds silly, but breathing is one of the few constants we keep from the time we are born until we

die. In other words, we can go a long time without food, water, shelter, etc., but only survive for about two minutes without air. We are always breathing, and therefore often take it for granted

Over the years your breathing technique became ridiculously horrible: hunched over, shallow inhales, only filling the upper chest, only using the upper lobes of your lungs . . . yeah, shitty.

When we straighten our torso and utilize the lower lobes, our lungs can expand way down to our belly button. Many of our nervous system's relaxation receptors live in the lower lobes. Fight-or-flight and panic receptors live in the upper lobes. Breathing slowly and deeply into the lower lobes will calm everything down, mind and body. It's the same reason people are told to take ten deep breaths when having a panic attack. But what would this do for our anxiety in general if you breathed more correctly all the time?

Here's another fun fact about the breathing.

In recent years, talk of using psychedelic drugs, like DMT and ayahuasca, have been touted as a tool to invoke a spiritual experience if used in a controlled environment. They say this chemical is naturally produced in the human pineal gland (third eye). This is not false, but do you know which human organ produces the most DMT? The lungs! So, when you see a Zen Buddhist monk focusing on his breath beneath a tree, he's essentially just sitting there tripping balls.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Doctors Say This, That, and The Other Thing

*If I place a pair of glasses with red tinted lenses over your eyes and you look at a piece of paper, is the paper red? If I took those glasses off your face and cracked the lenses then put them back on, is the paper now misshaped?*

*- Yours Truly*

### Time Period: Early Recovery, Fresh on the Wagon

*I'm doing the whole doctor thing. I met with general practitioners, psychiatrists, psychotherapists—a whole team of medical professionals. Now they tell me I have another problem, as if being an Alcoholic isn't enough.*

*They say I have a dual diagnosis, or co-occurring disorders. They say I have a chemical imbalance in my brain, and that I should take medications they call mood-stabilizers and anti-depressants. They tell me my condition is chronic, a genetic defect, and that it's possible I may need to take pills for the rest*

*of my life. They don't know which came first, the mood disorder or the addiction, but that they most likely exacerbate each other, and I must tend to both.*

*I noticed the side effects from the medication after only a couple weeks. Everything the doctors give me seem to trade any semblance of comfort with an equal or greater discomfort. Either I gain a crap-ton of weight, can't sleep, get bad acid reflux, restless legs, or they make me feel nothing—an emotionless zombie.*

*None of them seem to work for what they are prescribed for. They tell me, "you need to weigh the risks with the benefits." But the pills sure don't stop me from wanting to drink.*

*When I tell this to the doctors, they say I am just on the "beginner's dose," that the doses will be increased as my body adjusts, and that it will take some experimentation to get the cocktail right. Yeah, that's how they put it, "cocktail". It's been a month on these drugs and with this one ill-spoken word my gums watered.*

*They also warn me that when we do find a good mix, an "effective dose," it probably won't work forever, so then we'll need to experiment more by adding other drugs or increasing dosages, or maybe just starting all over with an entirely different brand. "We'll see how it goes," they say. It sounds to me like their just fucking guessing.*

*When I tell the professionals that I have no desire to be on these medications, they throw me the sales pitch—their guilt-bomb rebuttal. With a practiced tone, they say, "You had no problem drinking a lot of alcohol and taking other street drugs to feel better."*

*If I continue to describe the treatments as ineffective—that I'm not feeling any better, and it's making me feel worse than if I'm simply sober—they tell me I'm most likely self-sabotaging,*

*that it's just my mental disorder talking, and to, "Give it a little more time."*

*Accepting the fact that I'm an Alcoholic is easy, that much is obvious to me, but I'm not totally convinced I truly have a separate mood-disorder too.*

*The news keeps getting worse. The doctors, the detox facility staff, courts, and everyone else have all recommended I start attending 12-Step support group meetings—AA.*

*One of the mandatory requirements for some past DWI offenses was for me to go to these god-awful meetings and get a slip signed as proof of my attendance. Probably the most creepy and depressing group of people I've ever seen in one room. It's so awkward, and most of the people in these meetings look like they're in the last place on Earth they want to be.*

*Everything about the 12-Step program screams organized religion and cult. I can't stand those types of establishments. It's like they prey on the vulnerable, feed them a line of crap, and con them out of their money.*

*As far as I can tell from the meetings I've attended so far, those folks still relapse. Even if they'd been attending for months or years, people still slip; and sometimes I have to sit there and listen to some dark story about a member who died from an overdose. So depressing.*

*From where I stand, the people on medications and the ones sitting in meetings still appear to be struggling and whining about their shitty miserable lives. Where are all the happy former-Addicts who all this stuff supposedly worked for? Why would anyone want to attend a program that obviously isn't working for everyone?*

*I'm a smart guy in most areas ... besides drinking. I think I'm*

*just going to research what's going on with me and try some natural approaches and holistic treatments like healthy foods, exercise, meditation, vitamins, being outdoors, and staying away from some of the toxic people in my life.*

## Time Period: Present Day, and Sober

Doctors can be . . . an interesting group of professionals. They seem to only be of much help when we already know a lot about what is going on with our health. Be careful. You must recognize that most Western medical doctors are trained to do two things: diagnose us with a *billable disorder*—according to the signs they can find, and symptoms we can articulate—and prescribe a Food and Drug Administration approved *medicine* or treatment. Oh, and occasionally they recommend we eat more fruits and vegetables and less carbs.

The FDA doesn't necessarily have the best track record for passing the healthiest foods, chemicals, and drugs for mass consumption onto the population. All the top deadliest ingestible killers in the U.S. have the seal of approval from this enterprise; not to mention, they receive half of their funding from the same industries they are supposed to be regulating. (Nothing wrong with that setup.) And don't get me started on the correlation between poor quality food, health, and the need for drugs later in life as a direct result of toxic substances freely marketed to everyone.

There are no legal standards saying that any medical treatments must be successful. There are no legal standards saying that the treatments must be the healthiest, safest, or most effective options for healing.

This might be why they make us sign an Informed Consent contract stating that we understand ALL the risks (which you will not always be told about), and had the cognitive capability to weigh whatever little information the doctor divulged about those risks against the (sometimes misleading) benefits.

It's not entirely the doctor's fault. They are extremely limited

in what they can do. Their legal scope-of-practice is very exclusive due to their training, liabilities, capitalistic trickles, and the lack of patients who are willing to self-adjust their lifestyle. (That last one being the most important.)

In other words, many doctors understand much better healing paths for their patients, but often fall to their knees before the industry's trending paradigm, like a classroom instructor who yearns to teach their students alternative lessons and information, but doing so would stray from mandated curriculums and threaten their career.

Mental health/substance abuse disorder treatment in modern, Western medical practice can look something like this: "From what you have told me, it appears you may have a chemical imbalance in your brain (there is no actual science behind this theory, but I have been told there was,) and I have these pills which might assist in bringing it closer to balance and make you feel better. Just don't abruptly stop taking them (because your brain will always be fighting to rebalance while you're on them, and cessation will cause cravings and some other really fucked up shit I don't care to get into right now). . . just keep taking them until it kinda looks like things are getting better.

In conjunction with these high-powered psychotropic drugs, which the FDA claims are totally safe for you (meaning that the pills didn't kill anyone within the very limited clinical trial period before the FDA approved them), I also advise you to make appointments with a talk therapist to work on how to better manage your emotional issues without relying on drugs (unless you get them from us)."

They told you that you were born with a chemical imbalance in your brain and that it may have contributed to your addiction. They misconstrued the word "chronic", hinting that this word



means you're likely to have the disorder indefinitely (which current statistical studies confirm as correct, *if you continue to comply with their neuro-toxic therapies*), and you better listen to the "experts", or you might be experiencing your brokenness your entire life.

How scary is that?

At least the conventional medical paradigm understands that most maladaptive behaviors and decisions stem from emotions; including falling for their ridiculous, universal, one-size-fits-all, unnatural treatments.

Interestingly, the emotional center of our brain (limbic system) sits dead center between Scaredy Cat and Mr. Potato Head. The only thing standing between a survival trigger and a good or bad decision is the emotional center—and lack of proper information I might add.

Ultimately, emotions and feelings are the triggers for decisions, and over time, you just learned that the easiest way to deal with an emotion, or how to obtain a desired feeling, was through chemical manipulation.

The problem with repeatedly ingesting psychotropic medications is that now you're taking new (pharmaceutical) drugs to help with your emotional malfunctions. Sound familiar?

How can you work on a problem, which your mood symptoms are trying to alert you to, if those symptoms are being suppressed and manipulated by drugs? Isn't that what you were already doing? Weren't you already sitting at the bar with your glass full of medication, venting to your drinking buddies about all your problems and worries, searching for validation and possibly a different perspective about your situation? Maybe it's time for an entirely new approach.

Look, meds can change your brain chemistry, as does eating

three bags of candy per week, divorce, regular consumption of horror movies and News broadcasts (same thing), isolation, laughing, pop-up expenses, exercise, punching a wall, or habitual attitudes towards anything. Try stepping on a fucking Lego with your bare foot and tell me whether it's affecting your mood and brain chemistry!

My point is, there are thousands of ways to alter brain chemistry. Using drugs is now an outdated and ineffective approach for us. You already tried that!

Here is my disclaimer.

Some pills are sometimes necessary to get the healing ball rolling when an individual's thoughts and energies are way too far out of *control* (the acute stage), like if someone becomes suicidal, a danger to themselves and others, or are stuck in a destructive cycle. This type of treatment is intended for emergencies, very short-term treatment of acute symptoms, which is the style of medicine the Western paradigm excels at.

In theory, these pharmaceutical treatments do help (somewhat), 1-2 years. But this is assuming the diagnosis was accurate. I say this because there are far too many cases where someone will describe symptoms of something like depression, receive a treatment for depression and become manic from that treatment, then receive another diagnosis of bipolar disorder and told to take more pills, and so on, and so on.

In a perfect world, if the patient is properly diagnosed, is aware of, and executes all the changes they need to make in their life within the first year, then they can ween off the prescribed drug with supervision to avoid severe withdrawal from the psychiatric pharmaceutical (which is still a mood altering substance that causes dependence and withdrawal), and then spend the next month or two letting their brain chemistry

rebalance on its own accord. (Huh?)

Let's skip back a tic and talk about that word, *control*. If we research these little "wonder drugs" that are sold to us with the lure of convenience, availability, and the life-long brainwashed trust to believe any person wearing a white lab coat and a tie, we find an interesting little fact. Most of, if not all, the benefits we receive from these mental health drugs are the result of the Placebo Effect, or witchcraft. (To find out what I mean by witchcraft, just look up the etymology of the word pharmacy.)

The highly credible studies that describe this phenomenon between Placebo Effect and medications and treatments (of all sorts), have been buried deeply by the pharmaceutical industry, hidden from mainstream information systems, and for good business-model reasons. This information is not hard to find, but we were told that we didn't need to find it, because the scientists hired by the industries who profit "have our back".

We'd heard of the phrase Placebo Effect before but had never been taught its power. But let's not take any alternative-information source's word for it, we can look right at the studies and claims given by the drug companies themselves (in the fine print). They often describe that medication prescribed for mental illness generally works 3-7% better than Placebo, sometimes up to 15-17% if we're lucky. This is their own research, scientific studies performed and funded, in one way or another, by the manufacturers and distributors of the product. Even if these studies are accurate, those rates give us a big fat BARELY on the effectiveness scale.

What these numbers tell us is that if someone (somehow) becomes 100% better while taking the prescribed drugs, on average, about 90% of the benefits are accredited to hoodoo witchcraft, positive thinking, or prayer; and about 10% of the

progress was due to the drug's chemical reactions in the body, while ignoring any additional problems from side-effects (and the withdrawals undergone when ceasing the prolonged use of the neurotoxic medication as the brain recalibrates like it was supposed to do naturally in the first place . . . but I digress).

They find this effectiveness percentage by giving a pool of test subjects a sugar pill (placebo, fake medicine) or the real drug. The subjects don't know which one they received. Then the scientists "observe" (usually with a simple questionnaire) to see if the drug relieves more symptoms in the test subjects who swallowed the real pill verses the people who took the fake pill. The sugar pill group is often called a control group, and the benefits they receive are all psychosomatic (affected by mind power derived from belief). In these studies, of mental health drugs, the mind-fuck benefits of taking the fake drug are recorded as slightly less than the testers taking the real drug. The sugar pill works too! Not only does it work, it works just a tiny fraction less than the real drug. It works damn near just as well as the real deal, according to their own studies.

Oddly enough, the placebo group often show side-effects to the sugar pill as well, because they already know that drugs come with side effects and their system reacts to the belief.

What this means is that most people could probably get the same results with a little better sleep, a dietary tweak, and a little more exercise—if they carry the belief that they're doing the right things to make them better. By the way, science has proven a hundred times over that this natural approach is far more effective than any pill when dealing with mental illness, probably because the person is doing things that improve their health and not throwing more drugs at it.

Other studies have shown that the effectiveness of the placebo

changes with the shape and color of the fake pill. It works well with an average, aspirin size, white placebo pill. Even better with a larger placebo pill. Better yet with a colorful placebo pill. Better than that when the pill is in capsule form. And when the placebo is delivered via injection, the rate of symptom reduction rockets past all. They also found that customer service, and the verbally prescribed outlook of the treatment (prognosis) from the person in the white coat, drastically affects the effectiveness of the fake treatment.

In this matter, Placebo Effect means that most of the benefits we receive from the medication are a direct result from our *belief* that it works. It's a beacon to how powerful thought is. But who cares about that? We have been well trained to buy and consume things to make us feel better our entire life. Taking a newer, "safer" drug seems like the right thing to do because we had been told to do it by every idiot walking the streets, and by "the experts" for so long. We had been told it's what we are supposed to do—that it's the next best thing. And if we believe in the drug, as we always had, as we'd been conditioned to do since birth, we think it will cure our woes and discomfort in the same exact way as when someone buys a new car, a largely overpriced house, an awesome vacuum cleaner, or when we were a kid and begged our mommy for those light-up shoes to make us run faster.

Everybody-and-their-commercials pushed the idea of improvement-through-a-product in our face a million times per year. They all said it would make us a better person, ease our duties, make us look cool and trendy, and that the purchase would make us feel good. They sold us an image, a fantasy, a feeling. And feelings are very temporary. Nevertheless, this tactic is great for sales and repeat customers.

Amid all these microwave-dinner remedies, we missed the

point of healing the *source* of these signs and symptoms for our “mental illness” because that’s all we could see: the top layer, the signs and symptoms, the discomforts—and half the time we were trying to look away from those at all costs. And the distractions we use do so cost us greatly.

The real problems were not even peeked at. We thought that putting a piece of tape over the check engine light on our dashboard would fix the oil leak. We took the approach of turning up the stereo to drown out all the knocking and rattling of the engine. In other words, we got to take another drug to feel better, and change little else. It’s the easy way out. Everyone likes the easy way out.

A soft example of this would be if someone worked on a computer at a desk for 40 hours per week. Over time, they may begin to experience frequent headaches. Are the headaches the problem, or are the headaches a symptom of the problem?

There are many ways to solve this. The person could routinely stretch, get massages, maybe go for walks during lunch break, get a screen filter for the monitor, wear fluorescent lighting sunglasses, change postural habits, improve breathing habits, stay hydrated, stop eating hotdogs at the gas station across the street . . . There’s even the option of changing jobs altogether. Another solution is to start taking pain relievers because who the hell wants to change anything in the routine that gets them through the day with the least inconvenience or discomfort? Everyone likes the easy way out.

Whether it was intentional or not, the prescribed drugs inevitably became the *Enabler*, allowing us to continue with our life in the same ways as before. We were able to continue with the same job, same spending habits, same screen time, same relationship dynamics, same diet, same attitudes, and blah blah

blah.

Nothing needed to change—except that we took two pills a day—until the same factors that led to our drug-abuse caught up with us again, snapping the belief-crutch of the new drug in half and smacking our face onto the curb because we were never emotionally motivated to adjust our internal and external life. The pills became the new sparkly piece of fancy tape that masked the check engine light.

Placebo Effect means that something, like a medication, works simply because we believe it does. Think about that. The medication works merely because someone told us that it would, and we believed them. How powerful is our belief, and who is controlling that belief through suggestion?

Let's look at belief-triggered physiological reactions from a different angle.

When we ran out of our stash and were fiending for our drug of choice: riddled with nerves, scratching at the walls, aching for a hit—after waiting an hour for the liquor store to open or the dope man to finally arrive—once we finally got the drugs in-hand we immediately felt better. Not to the satisfaction of our end goal, but better. Our nerves settled down before our blood stream even soaked the shit up. A big chunk of our symptoms vanished before the drug could even do its *thang* on our body chemistry and nervous system.

In this scenario, a hardy chunk of how bad we felt stemmed from our physical reaction to the *belief* we held about the absence of the *thing* that we *thought* was going to make us feel better. Almost all our worries were instantly pulverized the moment that first sip tap danced on our tongue. But wait, doesn't it take about fifteen minutes for the alcohol's chemical affects to engage with the body chemistry, or did the chemical reactions begin with the

first sip?

Simplified, if we think something will make us feel better, then it has the power to do so. It's not so much as the *thing* that makes us feel better, rather the belief that it will. That's the power of Belief. What if you had control over your own beliefs? Or, better yet, why don't you? I meant that to be confusing—sometimes ya gotta stir the sauce into the noodles.

Another problem with this prescription plan of attack is it takes way too long. Typically, psychotropic medications take about a month to build in our system before kicking-in and becoming somewhat effective, and that's just the timeframe for the beginner's dose. We've got another few weeks or months before the effective dose is found and engaged. If someone can go sober this long without the assistance of a new drug, why the fuck would they even need it? It only works if the patient thinks it's working before it actually is (in whichever capacity).

I find this an odd strategy considering the medicine was never intended for long term use, because it's a neurotoxin. The longer one takes it the riskier it becomes. It's why the clinical trials only lasted for about six weeks. After that, the side-effects kick in and the placebo effect wears off, the patient stops taking them, experiences craving and withdrawal, and knows of only one way to turn off the alarm fast.

When you decide to do a little research about the effects of long term use on your own (which are only discovered after the drug has been approved and tested on the general public), you will find things like, "The side-effects of long term use of anti-depressants may include: reduced positive feelings, emotionally numb, sexual problems, weight gain . . ." Are you kidding me! Obviously, the list goes on, and these side-effects are only the ones reported by the same people who already hold a dilapidated



orientation to their emotional landscape in the first place. But once again, I digress.

After about a month of waiting for the prescribed drug, or drugs, to take that tiny percent of the edge off, the doctors asked us again how we're feeling while using their drugs and treatment. We thought they were asking if we felt better using the drug, or if the medication was helping. But this was not the case because how were we supposed to notice something that's not there? What they were asking was if we were experiencing any negative side-effects, believed it was working, and if we wanted more.

Just like any other visit, dosages are to be tweaked, and most often increased. Sometimes another medication is added to improve the outcomes or fight the side-effects from the first. Sometimes the med doesn't seem to be working at all (if we don't believe in it enough), so they must start over and try a new drug. "This new drug here has great science behind it. Let's try this one." This can go on forever, and believe it or not, some people are making a lot of money from it.

The prescription drugs are only considered a preventative measure, not a cure for anything. A hazard control to keep us safe from the monsters in our head, like when we were a scared child and needed protection from the creatures in our closet and under our bed. It's a security blanket, a binky, especially for the addict.

I say especially for the addict because the trendy mental health drug models are applied to the population who display symptoms of mental illness, but often disregard how the patient dealt with their symptoms beforehand. This begs the question, should there be a difference between treatment for a Normy versus an Addict when it comes to mental health drugs?

The drugs are used to manipulate moods, emotions, feelings. The addict has been doing this for years. It's the only way they

know how to manage. The addict has not learned to manage without drugs. The Normy does not have this predisposition. The Normy does not have an extensive history of using drugs to manage their moods. The Normy is often simply experiencing a difficult season in their life, more than they typically can handle. So, the Normy only needs a temporary crutch until they can get back to their manageable stress loads. This is entirely different than a person who has always handled everything with a drug.

These days, if an addict seeks “treatment” in a medical setting, this chemical therapy is often started as quickly as possible, within the first week of sobering up with no time for our physiology to rebalance naturally, and in my experience, they literally tell the addict that it most likely won’t. No time for a drug free existence. No time to tell whether it’s the medication or the natural healing process producing better moods.

It wasn’t always this way. Many psychiatrists would prefer to wait until a patient balances out from their previously self-prescribed medication before using an almost identical plan of attack. And then again, many would not. Not to mention, everyone’s begging for the stuff. “Just give me something!” we say.

The medications were well intended to provide a crutch while we navigated an unfamiliar world and worked on some changes, mainly to avoid a catastrophic relapse, but the reality was that this type of therapy also took away our inherent emotional/motivational mechanisms for change.

See the problem there?

The problem is that it makes no difference whether the pharmaceutical drugs work or not, it’s the act and belief that one needs to reach outside of Self for the comfort. Meanwhile, we were urged to keep in touch with the talk therapist who gives us

a pat on the back for sticking to the treatment protocols, and everyone wonders why we are still struggling so hard, or why it's not working at all.

*Side note: If you are telling you're doctors that you're feeling much better on the psych meds after the first week or so, you are full of crap. It's all Placebo and can be attributed more to positive thought and the absence of huge amounts of your drug of choice floating through your system than to the introduction of a new pill. It's psychosomatic, and the doctors (should) know it. The medication has nothing to do with it. They know you're on a low dose and you need to slowly develop a tolerance to this stuff before they can prescribe the effective dosage. And yes, again, they know this is how it works, but often justify it by saying, "Who cares how it works, as long as it does?"*

*Furthermore, how many craving triggers do you think we can pull within one month while waiting for these drugs to deliver their tiny benefit? Talk about delayed gratification.*

It's not all bad, and I am not trying to bash the medical system. Western medical interventions are totally awesome in emergency situations. That was how it came to be, from wartime, emergency, situations. If you got your leg blown off from cannon fire you would most definitely want Western medical attention. Acupuncture, meditation, and essential oils don't do much good if you were to get stabbed in the belly with a bayonet and your guts are hanging out.

Western Medicine is awesome at fixing things, but not so much at healing. For example, if you got jumped in a dark alley by a gang of strung-out Sesame Street characters because the furry blue one saw you walking down the street with a box of girl scout cookies, one of your many injuries might be a broken leg—the tall, yellow, feathery one has a mean stomp-kick. You go to the hospital and they take X-ray pictures to see where the break is and how bad. Then they realign it and wrap it in duct tape. The problem is *fixed*, but what *heals* the bone? What rebuilds the osteoblast matrix? What adds the minerals needed to reinforce the break site? What repairs all the other cuts and scrapes? And what heals the emotional damage?

Healing is an entirely different technology: it's also an enemy of profit margins. It's just a horrible business plan to cure people or teach them how to heal naturally. Due to this fact, many natural treatments (and preventative measures) have been hidden over the years under the guise of cost effectiveness and “science”, in the same way energy technologies have been hidden and held back from us by Big Oil companies. Do you really think we still need oil and coal to run machines in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Do you really think human ingenuity is incapable of doing it otherwise? It's the same in the medical world when it comes to healing. But enough about that.

The current conventional medical system simply doesn't work well for what addicts need to heal properly, thoroughly, and long-term. Therefore, almost every single medical professional will recommend you go to support group meetings. They know a proper social environment works better and longer than any treatment they can cost-effectively provide (although, they do try via the sales pitch of an additional mental illness diagnosis.

That been said, we should not ignore what modern medicine is great for, the more dangerous stages of sobering up during detoxification—the emergency phase. Great for emergencies, not so good at getting you to stop doing what gets you sick.

The medical system can attempt to create favorable internal and external environments which may help facilitate the healing process, but they cannot do healing to you. There is only one specific intelligence that has that technology. Here's a hint: we are made of it.

*Chew on this: The last time I checked, the average amount of times an Addict goes through Chemical Dependency Treatment before it sticks for good, before they stay sober for a substantial amount of time, is seven. Seven treatments before it sticks, or they give up, or the other consequences. Talk about insanity.*

*Are we just dumb-ass slow learners who don't understand what the doctors and counselors are doing for us? Or is this how many times it generally takes before we realize that it's not their duty to put us back together?*

Skiping along.

Talk therapy with a professional can be a fantastic tool. I have great respect for these therapists. I don't care how much of a positive, happy person you think you are, we can all use some Real talk. But I also believe psychotherapy has become more a soft practice in response to the ever-growing fragility of the patients in this era; that, and the demand for fantastic customer service—the preempt of repeat customers.

It would be much more effective if we were a ninjutsu student training high-up on some mountaintop in Japan where we obeyed every command the Master told us without question. But obviously, conventional talk therapy does not use this format.

The new patient is considered “vulnerable”, a victim of their diseases. To acquire the participation of the patient, the therapist must “meet them where they’re at” or work on whatever the patient is comfortable working on. They must constantly assess the patient’s readiness levels—but have we ever met a recently practicing Addict who’s ready to make any changes for more than a day?

If the guy with the fancy papers hanging on the wall isn’t super nice and considerate of the patient’s triggers, the patient might get too uncomfortable and stop attending sessions. The therapist needs to push the patient’s comfort zones of introspection gently; until one day, they have some shifts in their perception about the roots of their problems and *consider* taking some action to change them.

Over time, the therapist may be able to push harder and faster, and eventually get the patient to realize they are indeed powerful enough to manifest a healthy life. It’s a race between psychological progress (turtle), and the Addict passing-out face-down in a closet with piss trickling down the leg of their jeans (rabbit).

In my opinion, talk-therapy, during early recovery as it’s generally executed today, is the same as training someone in the fine art of sweater knitting and then sending them out to fight a hoard of Vikings in the battlefield. We can stay nice and warm and cozy with that sweater, but the Addict will most likely not last long in the early fight.

Once again, I’m not trying to bash talk-therapy practices, or

any practices at all, or give the impression they don't work or help. They all have their place. Talking with people about your Self is one of the most effective routes for healing the psyche. You may not have the right people in your life to do this with at the exact time they're needed, so a professional might be the only option at the time.

But what we ended up finding was that we went to the first and second professional talk-therapy sessions and we felt great when we left, because we talked to someone. (These first few sessions are only the introductions.) Then we got to the third session and said, "Meh, it went okay." When, or if, we got through the fourth and fifth sessions it somehow became, "Whatever."

This sometimes happens because talking with a professional is a very inorganic style of interaction in the sense that we need to make an appointment, travel to an office building, wait in the lobby as the previous patient leaves with a crumpled tissue in-hand, sit in a small room and talk to a person who we know nothing about and who is getting paid to listen, then quickly schedule another appointment on our way out the door.

This can lose its zest relatively fast. It can easily become just another thing we need to do, especially if the treatment is not outrunning the escalating pressures of our cravings as we continue to overwhelmingly deal with the rebuild of life structures: work, school, relationships, homelife . . .

I'm not recommending the avoidance of doctors, but simply to learn how to work with them if we need to visit. If we are not trying anything on our own outside of the medical office or pharmacy checkout line, if we are not trying any of the hundreds of natural remedies and strategies out there and reporting these types of things to our medical professionals—then all the doctors

*can* do is throw syringes at a dartboard with a blind fold on. All they can do is jot things down on a prescription pad and hope it helps a little. All we are *letting* them do is play the part of an expensive accountability partner who we can cancel on at any time, guilt-free, because one day we decided, “They don’t know me, and they’re not helping to fix anything.” Working in conjunction with our medical providers, and not relying on them to fix us, optimizes our sobriety outcomes.

What I am saying, and science has proven this over and over, is if we begin to work on the things such as striving to return to anything resembling a natural existence, things we already know we should be doing (on some level), the outcome will be just as effective as taking drugs and sitting in a room with a shrink, if not a lot more.

The healthy rituals are what the medical professionals are ultimately trying to motivate us to do in the long run anyways. But look at who the motivation is coming from in this scenario, then take note of how many people you know who execute the advice given by others.

If the doctors are ethical and know their shit, they know they can’t fix us, they are not trying to heal us, they are trying to motivate us to seek out and utilize natural sources of wellness. Things like regular exercise, less junk food, shedding toxic people, seeking new healthy relationships, actively looking for more positivity, shifting our beliefs about what we can and cannot do, cutting our screen time in half, getting quality sleep, quality water. . . These little adjustments make an enormous difference in how we feel and are a good start for the healing process.

Once we get a few of these basics down, finding the source of our suffering is much easier. The fundamental part is that we are



not relying on drugs to make us feel better, we focus on making our whole Self better and this is what ultimately improves our disposition.

The doctors said we need to rebalance our biochemistry and blah blah blah, but do we really believe the human body can't rebalance itself if given a little time and nurtured properly? Do we really think we weren't designed to mend, regenerate, adapt, and overcome? Do we really think we can't learn to walk without the crutches once the casts are taken off our legs? What happens to our legs if we continue to use the crutches for a few extra years? The muscles wither, the bones heal weak, and are easily rebroken.

I will repeat myself. Remember that one of the body's and mind's main functions, which defines us as a living organism, is the ability to maintain homeostasis. We are born with the innate ability to heal and rebalance, if only we just get the hell out of its way and quit pumping it full of crap and overwhelming the system.

Here's some relatable evidence of this very concept of adaptation?

This rebalancing ability of ours is easily proven by our ridiculously high tolerance to poison. Just think about the ghastly amounts we could consume in a single day at the pinnacle of our drinking career. Now what if we drank that same amount in the days of the first year we started? You would be fucking dead . . . I would be dead! If we were to flip around the amounts of drugs that we were able to ingest at the end of our using career with what we could handle in the beginning, the amount would have killed us—but our body adapted. The body adapted to it so much that it changed its entire physiology to accommodate the drug's presence and constant assault. It can go the opposite direction

too.

Let me sum it up.

We ended up in the doctor's office because our dependence on drugs got to emergency levels. After the emergency is over, the medical intervener's only course of action is to attempt to dull the emotions with drugs and help with a little psychological babysitting until we can try to learn to cope with life using healthier habits and possibly less hazardous drugs.

While the intention is good, the results can be fatal, as evidenced by the normalization of the side effects from continued use of the mental health drugs—side-effects like suicidal ideation.

I wonder why that is? Maybe it's because these prescribed *boo boo kissers* allow people to feel better without changing a damn thing, without filling the mind-cup with a different spirit, one that heals instead of lies.

When the treatment no longer works it causes major setbacks, because we had nothing to lean back on, because we never truly stepped forward out of our comfort box and handled what we didn't feel like changing in the first place. We didn't feel like changing anything because we always changed how we felt with synthesized chemicals.

**Allegorical Alert:** If you need to forge a sword to cut your path through the jungle of life, it doesn't work well to wave the metal over a flame. About the only thing you can do with that method is soften a marshmallow. You gotta stick the blade right into the coals.

As for receiving secondary diagnoses (medical labels, a billable illness, or whatever you want to call it), obviously, you have an emotional/mental disorder or imbalance. How could you

possibly not? You've been soaking your brain in poison and buying into the unhealthiest trains of thought and habits for years. Just look around. The demands (both voluntary and mandatory) and chaos (some real, some fake) you expose your Self to daily are enough to drive anyone bat-shit crazy. But this does not mean your system isn't trying to regain its balance. It's always trying to get back to Natural, 24/7/365. You simply need to ask what's getting in its way.

Anyone, and everyone, has *something* going on (one or two diagnosable disorders). All people can be diagnosed with something if they visit a professional Diagnoser—just like no matter how good or bad our car runs; a mechanic can always find something to fix, or they can simply lie and say something is wrong.

Have you ever paged through the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM-5)? This book is considered the Holy Bible of mental disorder diagnosis. It's a little under one thousand pages long (1<sup>st</sup> edition was 130 pages in the 1950's, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition was 500 pages in 1980 . . . just sayin'), and it details almost 300 mental conditions, many of which contain overlapping symptoms describing how a perfectly healthy human being would naturally react to a sick environment over time.

The attention the diagnosis receives just depends on its severity (how it shows, or hides, its ugly little head in society), and the availability of trendy, cost-effective treatments (cost-effective means profit by the way). It has become a common practice within certain medical industries to cultivate a treatment and a mental disorder at the same time. I wonder why someone would do such a thing.

Many mental disorders are not necessarily a disability. They

can also be looked at as a description of what happens when a person has difficulty functioning within an overly complex and dysfunctional social system that has been attacking, manipulating, and threatening their mind and physical essentials.

The mentally ill person is often reacting to the poisoned water, modified food, educational indoctrinations, insane social expectations, and so on. Unfortunately, the cries for help from an ill person's soul are often met with smiling ridicule and another chemical attack.

Every human is different, but many do not fit quite as snug into specific societal roles as well as others. We are not “in-line,” we are “out-of-order” with the rest of the population who appear to be tolerating the pressures and expectations in better ways. This does not mean we are broken; nonetheless, we are taught to hate our self for our quirks and not taught how to listen to them.

With our individualities, there are some of us who go insane while grinding out the forty-plus hour work weeks. We just can't do it. We're just not built that way. Some of us simply can't absorb all the emotional influxes shot at us from hundreds of idiots transmitting their agendas day in and day out. Humans were not designed for that bombardment. Some of us can't do the whole “white picket fence and a dog” American Dream and keep our facade, because it overwhelms us; and that's okay, it overwhelms almost everyone.

Sometimes we need to readjust boundaries, goals, and priorities to suit our best interests and health. **Our best interests**, not the interests of what another person, or company advertisement, or “Reality TV Show” tells us will make us happy or feel better.

Look, we drank because we were selfishly attempting to

maintain certain emotional states, and we did it at all costs. Don't let that selfishness go, use it to become as authentic as you can be . . . for once. Just because you're not a super celebrity, a doctor, an accredited engineer, or can't seem to attain those six-pack abs does not mean you don't have something to bring to the table. You simply need to bring a different dish than what everyone else has been told to bring.

It sounds a bit harsh, but every single person on this planet is a slave to something. Everybody toils for something or someone. Some people exert extreme energy (physical or psychic) for their drug, and others, for their family, or property, or bank account, ideology, religion, image, politics, education, sobriety, fitness, and the list goes on. We must choose our master wisely. By this, I mean we must be careful how we design our daily lifestyle.

Where we focus our energy, priorities, and attention is a form of worship. Believe me when I say that we had been led to worship things, and entities, that do not have our best interests at heart. They do not serve us. Simply put, whatever intention we spend the most attention, energy, and time on during the week is what we are worshipping . . . period.

Some people spend one hour per week "worshipping" a deity, then spend countless hours worrying about, working for, and spending money without giving their so-called deity a second thought until it's time to rest from the grind again, or they look on the back of the green piece of paper and read the phrase "In God We Trust."

Some people spend more time watching electronic screens with a continuous flow of sex and violence (or drinking, or shopping, or whatever) than they do with their children, only to wonder years later how it came to be that something like social media has more influence on their child's decisions than they do.

Oh, and by the way, these two examples are completely normal and acceptable, and nobody asks why.

It takes some courage to stray from cultural normality, to be authentic. We must ask our Self some tough questions—the priority questions. Is *this* more important than *that*? Do I really need to live in a mini mansion? Do I really need a brand-new car, *this* or *that* person in my life, to work *that* many hours, get that degree, the newest smart phone, the perfect body . . .? Am I broken because I don't *have*? Do I really need to hold onto this or that worry, and how can I trim it off? Do I need *this*, or do I just want it, or do I even know if I really want it, and who told me I wanted it in the first place? What is it going to take to maintain all these things? What might I be missing out on that's more important? Is maintaining the status quo more important than my life? What *is* truly important? Do certain achievements improve me, benefit me, or do they inflame my personal workloads, surpass my tolerances, and spark a need for quick relief? Is this my will, or someone else's? Am I what I think other people think of me? Am I risking my health for some petty social programming? What needs to go, and what do I need more of?

If you don't answer these questions for yourself, believe me, someone else will do it for you, and they have been. All I'm saying is adjustments need to be made, and the only expert who can execute that list is you.

You kinda got two choices.

You can continue receiving attention from an industry that basically makes money by you being sick, not healthy. It's the easy way. It appears as if you are at least trying something, you are doing what were told to do, and you get to keep taking drugs for your "ouchies".

Or, you can do what I already know you're going to try,

because you think you're a clever little shit. And you are, but clever only gets you so far.

So, we said we were going to do some Health-nut stuff. Good, all of it is welcome. We want to address all our basic needs as thoroughly as possible to help stave off those maladapted Scaredy Cat mechanisms from triggering cravings.

There was only one flaw in our plan. We wanted to do it alone. We wanted to do it our own way. Does that sound like a good idea, to execute a plan constructed by a recently practicing Addict, a regimen created by our own cherry-picked rules for what we *feel like doing*?

By going at this monster alone, we are saying we can outwit our self. Think about that. Think about playing tic-tac-toe or a chess game against yourself. Think about fist-fighting yourself in real-time. How exhausting?

We tried the whole health guru thing—by our self. We became an expert in nutrition for our disease, took the right supplements, meditated daily, journaled, visualized, exercised, had deep conversations with open minded friends. We got physically healthy, and skilled in the art of healing in general. We made leaps and bounds in our Wellness Wheels. It all worked great, for a time, but it was missing something. Relapses still came, albeit more sporadically and less intense, but they came all the same.

Frustrated with the notion that maybe we didn't know best—that we didn't know how to solve the addiction problem, and that we couldn't figure it out—an unwanted epiphany hit us in the solar plexus like Bruce Lee's one-inch punch.

We realized we weren't trying to figure out the puzzle of how to stay sober at all. We were trying to find the cure. We thought

that we could achieve a level of health that would negate our abnormal reaction to a popular substance. We thought we could manifest the cure that would allow us to, one day, drink again. This is the Addict's will.

When we are dealing with a disease that tells us we don't have a disease, it's impossible to maintain anything like long-term sobriety alone. This is because there's no alternative feedback loop when we begin to lie to ourselves again. Believe me when I tell you that we will start to lie to our self eventually, tis the nature of the disease. It's how the demon works. There is no such thing as solo sobriety.

Isolation is the worst place to be in early recovery, and most likely it's where the drug eventually brought us. We're used to it, it's familiar, it seems more comfortable: zero accountability, zero skepticism, zero outside perspective, pick your own rules, and minimal support with no cheerleaders (a.k.a. nobody watching).

I know, I know. You say, "I have some friends and family members who care a lot, and they're supportive of what I'm trying to do."

It's not enough. There are different types of isolation. It is entirely possible to chat with people all day long and not one of them have a hint as to which caricatures dance in the dungeon of our heart.

Remember when we were more than willing to spill our soul out to any drunken listener? We were so quick to connect with anyone who wanted to share a bottle. It was so easy to tell our most stinky secrets to the wobbly person we shared a moment with while smoking on the patio outside of the bar. Why was there a need for that?

Those people seemed to understand, we connected with them effortlessly, they could damn near read our mind sometimes.



Yeah, we need those deeper interactions and understanding when we are sober too.

We eventually found a new way to channel healing, and it was through people. People can be very healing, just as much as they can be destroyers. We found we needed a certain type of people for the purpose of healing our specific type of damage. People like us. People of our tribe, our kin, our genetic quirk. People who can tune into our same radio frequency at the drop of a hat. People who have the experience to know where we have been and how we have felt—without explanation. People who have learned that there is another Will we can connect to outside of our ego.

We needed a team, and we needed to meet with them regularly, to practice with, to celebrate wins, and to help brush off the dirt when one of us falls. It is through these interactions, with these people, in this new herd, that we absorb healing energy via information and hugs we could not find on our own or read in a book—or pay any medical professional to give us.

Meeting with people who share our same goal is how shit gets done. If everyone has different objectives, if everyone has totally different priorities going on in their lives, then everyone's energy bolts in all different directions and dissipates.

Let's say we have assembled a group of people for a project that needs to be completed by a certain deadline. Maybe it's building a house for our dear old grandmama. Let's also say we are totally dedicated to this job, but two of the crew members aspire to be astronauts, another member is just a buddy who's simply paying back a favor he owed, and just for fun, let's say the last two members moonlight as exotic dancers.

The astronauts require shorter workdays so they can attend Buzz Lightyear Academy in the early evening. Our buddy can't

help on Fridays because that's when he goes snowboarding, but halfway through the project he sprains his wrist while attempting a killer triple-McNutt-twister-flip and is now on light duty. The exotic dancers always arrive late, but they distract the other workers when they practice their routine on the wooden wall studs, and they get glittery oil all over the tools which caused another worker to shoot themselves in the foot with the nail gun.

We end up building almost the entire house by our self. It takes way longer than it needs to. We experience much more frustration than is required. After some time, we find all the pieces we missed, all the mistakes we made, and realize we must start all over again because we don't want the house to crash onto grandmama's head.

Now, what if our team was compiled of seasoned construction workers who have more experience at building houses than we do? That's all they do, build houses, and they're good at it. This is the type of support group we want—Sobriety focused.

It's not the unconditional acceptance, or the comradery, or the suggested steps outlined in a recovery program that makes the healing process from this insane disease possible. While these things are invaluable to our personal growth, and do keep the process fun, they are only but legs beneath a table on which we hold a feast.

A feast for the opportunity to do what we are put on this planet to do, what we are all here to do. After we get past all the hub bub, get past all the material crisis and complaints, it is within this setting we get the chance to extend our arm and grasp another's hand. Help lift them out of hell and put a smile on their face, if only for a moment. Or, at the very least, give them some hope by being a positive example who shows them it can be done.

Regardless of how much sobriety time we have, the newcomer needs to see what it looks like to be even just a few weeks sober, or even a few days.

This is our true healing, healing of the core, not for the person we're trying to extend our hand towards, but for us, without any drugs. The rest of the program is simply good maintenance.

Whew. Let me wipe this tear away.

Well, that's the big secret. We can stop abusing drugs and get sober any day of the week, but we get to keep our sobriety by helping others stay sober. Whether it sticks for them or not, it makes no difference, because there's a cosmic law which requires that if we transmit something (like our sobriety and how we keep it) out into the world, it comes back to us in our reality. This is what the ancient wise dudes meant when they said shit like, "become the source of your desires." Granted, this is assuming your desire is to stay sober.

I am not trying to sell you on AA, NA, HR (Health Realization,) the NRA, the UPBJSA (United Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich Association,) or any specific group. . . Okay, maybe I am a little bit, but I can't tell you which one because that specific group has a fixed tradition of not getting involved in any controversial topics, and I just talked a ton of shit about a very controversial topic. But it doesn't matter what the group is called if everyone shares the same goal. It was the same as when we met up with our party buddies. We knew our goal was going to get accomplished no matter what. Even if we were broke-as-a-joke that night, we were going to find a way to get fucked up somehow.

Start to realize that when you put half the effort and ingenuity into our new life that you put into the old one, the transition will be a breeze. We have the drive; we only need to change the

direction.

The meetings are simply an easy and convenient place to do the unconventional healing work. They're already set up. There's typically a program to follow, which keeps us focused, and helps us unfuck our brain from past emotional baggage. Organic accountability is grown from the friendships formed, which helps when we lose track of the weeks when we become a little too busy killin' it in the real world. There are always some good reminders—when we meet and greet shaky newcomers—of where we could end up if we went back to our old ways. The meetings are a gathering ground, and the nice thing about support groups is they are already established almost everywhere, in every major city, all over the world, and many rural areas as well. They're a one-stop-shop. Did I mention they're free? And sometimes there's cookies.

The health guru stuff is all fine and dandy, but no amount of vegetables and push-ups, or pharmaceuticals and supplements, or meditation and journaling is going to make a shit-bit of difference when it comes to the urge of picking the bottle back up when life traps us in a dark alley and elbows us in the nose too many times without anyone there to back us up emotionally.

You must find a way to crawl out of our comfort-hole and be around different people. The regular exposure to people (who share our goal) weaves a safety net that catches us when times get hectic. You might not think you need that net at this very moment, but deep down you know that you and I will need it someday; so, we take the opportunity now to tighten the knots and test the twine for weak spots for when that time comes.

## Tricks, Tips, and Hacks

Change your perspective on mental illness. This is a tough one because “mental illness” is now a talismanic catch phrase. (Oh, I want to go on rant here so bad, but I digress.) Let me put it this way. Mental illnesses, and disorders, are simply a label for a group of **symptoms**, not the problem. It’s a way to describe how the long-term effects of the **problem** manifested in someone’s life. Find the problem, and you’ve found the **solution**.

Some food for thought: Someone who lives with Schizophrenia, in the West, is sought to be “made better” by folks with scholarly degrees using hardcore (legal) drugs, clipboards, locked doors, electrocution, and counseling. This is how that person is “treated” in civilized society.

In an “uncivilized” society, like an indigenous tribe, the “afflicted” are taught how to manage and control their unique traits. The tribe often elects such a person, who the West would diagnose as schizophrenic, into one of the highest ranks in their community.

These “sick” individuals—by Western standards—become the village’s medicine men, or Shaman (priest/doctor). They are put into a position of prestige because they are believed to have a direct line of communication with the spirit world. The tribe’s people value this individual’s special attribute very much. Many Westerner’s attempt to value this capacity as well. They read and sing about it every so often on Sundays.

I know, I know . . . mind blowing. Some might say, “But those tribal people are so primitive. They don’t even have affordable healthcare, money, air conditioning, mega-stores packed with

branded items made by slave children, brain-washing big screens to watch endless advertisements and play attention-span-reducing games on, or smartphones, jobs with overtime, polluting traffic jams, overcrowding, mass shootings, rampant diseases, corrupt leaders, stock market crashes, pointless war mongering, taxes and fees, mind-boggling stress . . .”

I guess I have no argument for you there.

It's not always easy to find a good support group meeting. The first few we investigate might be major turn-offs, like when we didn't vibe with every single bar we stepped into, or house that we partied at. But that didn't stop us from staying for a bit or looking for the next hot party spot. If we are serious about getting healthier, if we put a teensy bit of effort into it, we will find a group we enjoy so much that we'll get pissed off if we need to miss a meeting at our home group. So, keep looking.

As for the meetings full of weirdos, it didn't seem to bother us when we were out there running wild and abusing drugs, so why now? That bum sitting at the end of the bar—who we drank our lunch with for three hours straight on a random Sunday—wasn't beneath us then, so why is he beneath us now as he sits at the end of a table at support group meeting? We didn't seem to mind smoking with that crazy-ass carpet-farming tweaker at the dope house, so why avoid that jerky fellow having a cigarette with the group outside on the meeting-house patio? These are our people whether we like it or not, kind of like family.

## CHAPTER 3

### Dig Until You Hit Coffin

*One cannot learn the Savior's teachings without passing  
the Devil's tests.*

*- Yours Truly*

#### Time Period: Early Recovery

*My mind is clearing. I'm beginning to remember so many stupid things I said and did in my past that I'm losing count. The memories haunt me before I fall asleep at night. They slip into my thoughts at the most unexpected times. I cringe when thinking about who I became, what I did, and what happened to me.*

*Sometimes the urge to use again arises when my thoughts begin to landslide. The memories can get overwhelming. I try to push them back up the hill, only to have one drop onto my head when I'm driving in my car or watching a movie, and especially when I try to take a moment to relax.*

*The reflections are endless and random. They wear me down and drop my mood dangerously low. I'll be exercising in the gym,*

*or see an old friend on social media, then I get flashbacks of some party scene where I said something totally offensive, committed some ridiculous act, or made some idiotic decision that I've seemed to repress until now.*

*Then I wonder, how could that have happened? How could I have been so dumb? What was I thinking? All the burned bridges, all the missed opportunities. What must people think of me? Can I even look into the eyes of the people who are still around that tolerated my insane behavior?*

*I'm learning that a big part of my sobriety program deals with brutal honesty and cleaning up my past, but I don't even want to read what the literature suggests for me to do, let alone actually do any of the actions and talk about it with someone. The self-help books say it too, telling me to journal, forgive myself, and nourish my inner child. Whatever the hell that means? I'm pretty sure my inner child is pissed-off and doesn't want to talk to me anyway.*

*The old ghosts seem to wait on the other side of some door in my mind. I'm scared that if I open it completely and face these thoughts, my cravings will attack. Like I said, they spike just thinking about thinking about it. I'm afraid of what I will find. These intruding thoughts are enough evidence for me to know that I became a complete asshole. Isn't that enough, or am I just punishing myself more by procrastinating the work?*

*Sometimes I get a break from thinking about the past crap I pulled, then get anxious and overwhelmed about my future. What the hell am I going to do with my life now? How do I get my shit together this late in the game? Do I need to find a career? Do I need to go back to school? How am I going to pay the medical bills, student loans, credit cards . . . plus make rent? I need a damn car! Where am I going to find a girlfriend? How am*



*I going to perform sexually now that I'm sober? I've lost so much time and money! There's so much work to be done! Staying sober with all this stress seems unrealistic.*

## Time Period: Present Day, and Sober

We must be kind and gentle when we catch ourselves time-traveling—living in the past and future with our thoughts for too long and too often. We have already kicked our own ass enough. This is a time for love. Love is what heals. Most importantly, self-love. If insufficient emotional management was what got us into this mess, proper emotional management can get us out.

I know you have no idea how to love your Self, yet. You will get there. That's why it's imperative to be around people who love us unconditionally, the people who stayed connected through the good and bad, stuck around when we no longer benefited them; albeit, they may have done so from a distance.

These people include both newer acquaintances and the ones we tried to push away like an Olympic shotput thrower. The same people who we sought every flaw in, forming them into a puzzle piece that purposefully did not fit into our world. Sometimes, it's these people who will love us when we don't love our Self. These people might not be perfect at loving us, but they are better at it than we were. It can be a challenge to love our Self when we don't even know who we are, but now that our mind is clearing, it will be easier to learn how to love by example.

There is only one place to find Self-love. Coincidentally, this is the same place we find our Self. It's not only a place, but a timeframe as well. A place and time. As cliché as it sounds (as if "loving yourself" isn't cliché enough), self-love can only be found in each moment we are present for.

Each moment we are in attendance of, each second and each breath we have, is when magic can happen, but only if we are here (present, in time) to receive it. If you think about it, that's a lot of opportunities to make magical decisions based in love.

Decisions you never imagined making before. Decisions which can drastically change the course of our life.

It does us no good to attempt a deep conversation with a friend if we're obsessing over our to-do lists in the background of our mind. A hug is less potent if we're recollecting a time when that person lit our eyebrows on fire back in college. If our mind drifts to any event that is not happening while we read a book, we missed half the page we just read, and need to re-read it because we weren't mentally present.

When we are living most of our days in time-traveling thoughts—both the near and far past, and the near and far future—we are operating in a certain mindset I like to call Humpty Dumpty. (Get it? Egg . . . wall . . . had a great fall? Never mind, you'll get it later.)

When we are driving to work and thinking about what we will say to our mom at the family dinner that evening, that's Humpty Dumpty. When we are at work, thinking about the drink we want to slam after work, that's him also. When we are at the family dinner and are dwelling on how you could have been an Olympic Judo champion back in the day; yep, you guessed it.

Humpty Dumpty is the guy who identifies with the past, and he's the guy who believes he can predict and control the future based on what he has learned from past experiences and suggestions. He thinks linearly, in a straight line. He judges things as good or bad. He thinks hierarchically (high and low social statuses, one thing or person more important than the next). He calculates, tries to use logic, and has an insatiable need to "understand", but can only do this based on information that is presented to him. He is our bio-computer who interfaces with the material world. He is literal, closed minded, bull-headed,

black-and-white. He is easily conditioned by outside influences, programmed by repetition and basic positive and negative reinforcements. He's our autopilot reflex to situations. He is unimaginative, and untrusting of the unseen. He is the one who gets distracted. He is the one who compares us to other people. He gets very defensive if his beliefs are threatened, and his favorite belief is that he runs the show. He loves to boast about himself, but also loves to throw pity parties when he doesn't get his way. He will do anything for attention, and I mean anything—your attention and belief in what *he* says is how he gets his power . . . from us. He is the talking voice inside our head, and he knows how to lie very well.

While we need Humpty Dumpty to live and thrive and find where we fit and how we function within the physical world, it is easy to see how vulnerable he might be to a malfunction.

The good news is we have another Self who lives in the present moment timeframe. Yes, we have two Selves (at least). We will call our present-moment Self Primo (present moment, pre-mo, Primo). She is more of a stranger in passing to us. We might notice her briefly, give her a nod, maybe appreciate her beauty for a few moments, then it's back to Humpty Dumpty and on to the next distraction.

We are looking through Primo's eyes when we capture a moment of appreciation while admiring a beautiful landscape in nature, a sunset, a waterfall, or an up-close deer. When we are enthralled while holding a newborn baby and the entire world melts away without us even knowing, that's the Primo mindset. When we make love and nothing else matters besides the connection between us and our mate, that's Primo.

She is the mind-mode we engage in that is sometimes called "in the zone". If an athlete is on top of their game on the playing

field, they're not thinking about next week's game, or the one they played last week, or winning the one they're currently playing. They are barely *thinking* at all. They're in the zone. What the athlete is good at, in the sport which they **love**, is the ability to tune out everything: all distractions, stay in the moment, stay fluid, let go of past and future thoughts, and allow their mind and body to get the job done without interruption. Afterwards, Humpty Dumpty can enjoy the spoils when the game is won or be devastated by the loss.

Primo is also responsible for when we “zone-out”, thinking about nothing at all, blanked, or having a nice mental rest. A zone is a space, and the mind is indeed a large space packed in a small area.

Primo is also the mail delivery conduit of intuitive messages. It's called a message because we were not already thinking about it, the new knowledge seemingly came from elsewhere. She suggests which direction to go when Humpty Dumpty can't figure it out.

Primo doesn't have a clock, that's why time flies when we're having fun (in the moments). She's the listener, the watcher—and she whispers to us, but she never lies.

As we go about our day in the Humpty Dumpty mindset, everything we do and say is running off an autopilot program that we developed from our past experiences. Our thoughts about people, places, and things, are an autopilot program reaction that cause feelings for timeframes that are often nowhere near where we stand.

If we walk down the sidewalk on our way to a restaurant and a car splashes puddle-water on our brand-new shirt we might react emotionally to the incident, then decide to have a few extra “beverages” with our meal.

This sounds natural enough. Possibly a normal reaction to some asshole ruining our day and making us feel bad. But after the incident happened it cannot be undone. We have a choice. We can say it happened, it's over, moving on, I'm still alive, I wasn't going anywhere important anyway; or, we can choose to amplify the anger of the already passed event, hold onto it tightly and squeeze, let it ooze into our conversations with the people around us throughout the remainder of our day and poison their minds as well.

We could choose to go with Humpty Dumpty's dialogue, "Everyone's an asshole! You have every right to feel bad. You have every right to pump that emotion for all it's worth, for hours, maybe days! Man, we are so rationally mad right now about something that has passed. Let's change how we feel. Calm down, have a drink."

Only when we see things through Primo's eyes can we make a new decision. It's why we have saying like, "think twice (before you do something)," or, "measure twice, cut once." Why the twice? We already thought about it once. Who are we getting a second opinion from? Could there be a second mindset to consult?

We even overlook the universal saying, "great weather we're having today." Is this statement simply an ice breaker in passing, or is this an intuitive way to bring a person's attention back to the present moment by making them return to their immediate surroundings? Is this possibly a way to turn off a person's autopilot? With this weather question, most will snap out of any time traveling trance they might be in, and shift their focus to the present greeting or conversation; that is, until Humpty Dumpty steps back in and says, "yeah, but it's supposed to be shitty tomorrow." (Fucking Humpty Dumpty).

We often forget Primo exists despite using her quite often; although, in small doses. Overtime, we were led to believe she serves no function in our reality, leaving Humpty Dumpty as sole owner and operator of our bio-electro body-machine, taking all the credit for the good things that happen to us, and making external excuses for the bad.

A simple example of an exchange between Primo and Humpty Dumpty goes something like this. When we notice someone brought some yummy looking chocolate cake to share at work during lunch break (which always happens the first day we start a diet), we see it and say, “mmmm, cake.” Primo runs a secret system check on our mind and body. Everything is in working order: stomach full, blood sugar balanced, no major stressors that require medication. “We don’t need to eat that,” Primo whispers. “You know we need to lose some weight. You know it will give you a severe sugar crash by 3 p.m. Look, you’re not even craving cake. Besides, you have some sweets at home. You can wait.”

Humpty Dumpty says, “But it’s friggin cake! We deserve it. We worked so hard this week. We might want some later, but later it will be all gone. We might miss the fun of partaking in this delicacy with coworkers. They’re gonna talk about us if we don’t eat it. We’re gonna need the energy later—see, we’re tired, I can tell. It will make us happy for the rest of the workday. We don’t want to hurt anybody’s feelings by rejecting it. Eat it, eat it, eat it. Yessss! Mmmm, good yummy cake. Nom, nom, nom.”

When a trigger comes about, the autopilot (Humpty Dumpty) says, “When these things happen, you really need to \_\_\_\_\_!” (Fill in the blank with your favorite behavior.) He continues, “That’s how we have always handle this type of crap. It works, and it works fast. We don’t need to suffer any more than

we already have.”

Primo says, “Do you really need another problem right now? Take a few deep breathes. We will get through it. This is not all that bad. Just wait and see how things turn out before doing something rash that I already know you don’t want to do.”

Humpty Dumpty always has a rebuttal prepared. “That’s bullshit. If you want a list of reasons why we should do it, here it is . . .”

The trick is to turn down the volume on one voice and turn the volume up on the other.

When we are present, in the moment, not distracted by Humpty Dumpty and chasing shiny balls into the middle of the street, we can hear Primo speak loud and clear. This is our true voice, our commonsense, our healer, intuition, connection, and artistry. The voice of our innate wisdom who we have been seduced away from by the material world. The mind which does not judge between good or bad, but simply notices what is—or is not.

She’s the voice we learned to drown with never-ending streams of thoughts about regrets, fears, thrills, envy, planning, and focuses about anything and everything other than the exact moment we are living in. The Primo mindset has a lot less clutter to sift through, because all those other things about the past and future happenings do not exist in the time and space we are sitting in at this very moment. It’s simply a matter of focus.

We don’t feel our emotions in the future or the past, we feel them now—like, right now. The good or bad emotion can be attached to a thought we’re having about the future or past, but it is always felt in the present. The past memory, or a future worry, is felt right now, yet a past or future experience does not exist anywhere but in our mind, or stream of thoughts. It’s not



really happening. Our mind makes the thought feel real to us, and only us, in that moment, despite the event not happening in that moment. It's like an inner virtual reality.

When we think of anything, anything at all, good or bad, the emotion attached to that thought effects every little fiber in our body in big and small ways, because it's soul food. And just like the food we eat, over time, and depending on how often we focus on a thought that produces a certain emotion, it accumulates and affects our over-all health.

Now I'm going to pound this into the ground with a bunch more examples.

Why? Because it's important.

If we are sitting in a room, the tree we see outside the window is real, *when* we see it; our itchy leg is real, *when* we feel it; that hum of the refrigerator is real, *when* we hear it; the feelings about possible future consequences of something like a financial debt is real, when we feel it—but the future consequence itself is not real, not yet anyway. That car crash we were involved in five years ago is not real, not anymore. It's not happening right now. That rumor about the company lay-off is not real—not at this very moment.

These things we think about might become real at some point, or they may have happened at some point, but right here and right now, the thoughts of past and future happenings only live in our imagination. They are not here, they are fake, and most likely inaccurate as well.

Let's say we have an upcoming court date. On this future date we will find out the consequences of something that we "allegedly" did. That day is most likely scheduled weeks or months in advance. If this day is two months away, what good does it do us to constantly worry about it every waking minute?

Of course, we will worry about it quite a bit, but that's usually not good enough for Humpty Dumpty. He is now threatened by the future and he wants to obsess, lose sleep, bitch and whine, and make it harder than it already has been for everyone around him.

However, if we have done everything we can, if the result is out of our control, how much energy are we wasting while we wait? What good is it doing us to pull out all our hair over it? Who is now responsible for playing into a continuous state of frenzy causing us to miss today? Is it the court stealing away today's joy, or is it our own obsessive thinking about it?

Let's look at another scenario. What if we won't be able to make this month's rent, or worse yet, we're already late on paying it? If the energy we are spending on this regret cannot be put into any useful action to change the situation, then why the self-torture? Why increase the triggering mechanisms in our brain? Why add more of what we don't want? The bad day will eventually come, and that is the time we can stress about it; otherwise, we suffer twice.

Last one.

We have these "programs" we receive from electronic screens and speakers that broadly cast messages to the masses under the guise of entertainment and information. What are these messages, really?

Well, let's look at most of the content. They are often collections of murder, crime, sex, rape, corruption, mayhem, destruction, pain, violence, and lies; with a sprinkle of some poor shmuck who's trying to do something about it, a dash of comedy, and possibly a cute animal.

Huge companies spend large sums of money delivering all these stories of the past and future happenings from all around

the planet to present them to us, sometimes relentlessly, directly through the gates of our soul (the eyes).

We receive these message in our present moments while sitting in our living room, car, bedroom, fast-food breakfast restaurant, gas pump, work, smartphone; and if that's not enough, from the mouthpiece of our friends and family and coworkers, "Did you watch season four, episode 2 last night? No? Well guess what was on the News this morning."

Unless you live in a cave, you cannot escape the endless supply of horror our show-making industries have to offer. All these shows, movies, and reports shoot messages into our mind. These are mostly not happy messages, and they are not even real in the present moment, they are barely real in real-life. They were produced, edited, scripted, and rehearsed. These distraction industries seek and create every type of bad story they can muster, then blast as much of it as they can at our psyche all day long, to the point where everybody you know is asking if you've seen the latest massacre or falsehood on the screen.

So why do we obsessively absorb all this evil? Because it's Scaredy Cat's job to know about threats in our environment too. Scaredy Cat reacts to threats with fear. How much fear do you want?

The problem is that all these threats, which are sold to our soul as entertainment (even News is nothing but entertainment, distraction, and opinion shaping), rarely have anything to do with the time and space we are living in while we sit on the toilet staring at our handheld screen. Scaredy Cat doesn't know the difference. Scaredy Cat takes all these things as immediate threats.

Even if Mr. Potato Head can differentiate between the real and fake, remember, Mr. Potato Head is wired to do what

Scaredy Cat says. But Scaredy Cat only feels your flight-or-fight response to the information you're absorbing.

It's all light and frequencies and energy and intentions that our subconscious body absorbs (our subconscious does not reside within the brain, it's a collection of experience files stored in the cabinet of our body). And, being the same medium as Primo, the subconscious does not perceive time. Regardless, it's fed whatever we are focusing on in each moment, even if our focus is not on the moment. That moment's emotion is what our psyche and body eat, regardless of what timeframe or space we are focusing on.

You see, the subconscious always interprets whatever we are remembering, or anticipating, as happening right now. This is important. It changes everything. Moments pile up into weeks and months, and we become what we are in the habit of thinking. We are what we eat, even if it's mental consumption. If we are hooked on positive thoughts, we become that annoying and jubilant morning person who doesn't need any coffee for energy. If we are hooked on disastrous thoughts, we become Mr. Doom and Gloom and inadvertently put a damper on everyone's day when we converse. If we are Mr. Doom, but prance around smiling, we are fake. You can be Mr. Doom. or the Happy guy—bad and good things happen to both.

Moreover, Humpty Dumpty will step in and try to help out Scaredy Cat, because Scaredy Cat is a scaredy cat. But, when we continuously attempt to control our life's circumstances, we are more often focusing on the things we don't like, what we want to change, what we would like to go away, what we don't want, or are unhappy with.

These trains of thought gain momentum, and produce more and more unwanted swirls of negative emotions, which are

stored in our body until they're properly dealt with.

Oversimplified, how can we work towards something we want when all we look at is what we don't want; meanwhile, overlooking what we already have?

We are not perfect. It's not like we're ever going to become a monk who walks around in a robe chanting and humming all day in some monastery while making sure to not squash a passing ant. But, if we are consciously present, even for short amounts of time, focused only on what is happening from moment to moment, breath to breath, we find that the things we were regretting and worrying about do not exist right now, and we can relax.

Scaredy Cat likes it when we relax. When relaxed, we can think straight, put things into *proper* perspective, listen to the voice of Primo (who we once loved to ignore so much with our distractions), and we relax more and more.

Relaxation practices can gain momentum too, much like getting crazy worked-up over something, but the opposite direction. When we're relaxed, there is less need for the quick fix to decompress after a hard workday, because our mind was more relaxed during the workday. There's no need to loosen up at the social function because we are already loose. There's no need to reach for emotional chemistry experiments to fix what isn't a problem. And, when we are relaxed, our body shifts into healing mode (the parasympathetic nervous response, rest mode, R&R) allowing our entire system to undo imbalances on its own: repair cells, grow new cells, and perpetuate even more ease of mind.

Ironically, when we practice this peace of mind, when we can relax and become friends with our thoughts, we often find that half of the problems we were getting so worked-up over sort themselves out somehow. We didn't need to do anything! What

a waste of energy when we find out we were worrying over nothing.

Another perk to this calmness is that, when we are not exhausted from chasing our insane monkey mind around the psychic circus tent, and our brains have some time to rest and digest the situation without Humpty Dumpty conning Mr. Potato Head into miserable schemes, the solutions for most of our perceived problems often pop into the spotlight from out of nowhere (Primo breaks through), usually simple in nature and right under our nose the whole time we were panicking.

When we can focus on the experience at hand, minute to minute, breath after breath, one task at a time, when our mind is inside our body (grounded), when we keep our attention on what is really happening around us, it creates open space. A space uncluttered by anxious future worries and past shoulda-woulda-couldas. A space where love and understanding can flex their muscles. That's when miracles happen. That's when and where we find It, in those moments we are fully present for. The more moments we are here for, the stronger we get, simply because we are not wasting all our energy. Make sense? More energy, more strength, more power. Think of a battery.

Here's an example of calming the fuck down. Imagine taking a walk through a neighborhood park because we are freaking out over how hard life seems. The white-water rapids of the thought river we are paddling up in our ego-canoe has our body and mind in full fight-or-flight mode and red-lining our system on adrenal fatigue because this thought pattern has been going on for quite some time now. We can't stop. We are exhausted. We feel heavy. We feel that knot tightening in our chest.

Kicking pebbles on the walking path with our head hung low, we look up and see children playing on the jungle gym across the

way. We sit on a bench and watch them. We observe how much fun they are having. We hear their laughter and yells and we join in on a giggle when one of them falls off the slide and lands on their butt in the gravel. Almost living through them vicariously, we smile big.

For a moment, we are unknowingly care-free. Noticing the sunset's pinks and purples in the sky, shadow of a large tree stretching across the grass, the song of singing birds, and the cool fresh air in our lungs—we take a deep breath. We get off the park bench and continue our walk with a whole new feeling.

Most likely, we tapped into a reservoir of new energy. Our emotions, posture, thoughts, and vibe all changed simply by taking a few moments to watch some kids go down a slide. We took a moment to be present, and simply changed the angle of our perception. When we look at things differently, or should I say look at different things, reality changes.

How magical is that? There was no need for an influx of money into our bank account to feel that way. There was no need to score some drugs to feel that way. There was no need for much of anything except to take a step back from our inner storm and soak in what's right in front of us. This is when and where we find strength and love, and it happens when we practice sitting still amongst our turmoil.

Consistent overthinking—an addiction in and of itself—becomes a threat to our psyche, and we know what happens to Humpty Dumpty when he's threatened—he blows it all out of proportion. When Humpty Dumpty thinks the world is coming to an end, the subconscious body interprets those thoughts as if we are caught in the middle of a real forest fire, and this triggers an emotional response of fear, by design.

Maybe it doesn't happen immediately, but these little

pressures (these little forest fires) do buildup over time if we continue this habit of thinking or focusing on anything and everything that is not happening right now, or at least in the day we are living in. It just helps us feel safe when we intentionally ignore fake threats to our immediate environment.

If we believe and focus on the fake threats, our body chemistry lives in fight-or-flight mode far too long, knocking it off balance, affecting its homeostasis and, therefore, it's function. In this way, many of our cravings stem from these time-traveling trains of thought.

By keeping our mind overwhelmed with what is long past gone, or what might be, we miss the reality of the moment, the reality where everything is much better and more serene than our imagination is allowing us to believe. Yeah, we might be able to predict next week's shitty situation, but it doesn't need to ruin today's sunset.

Awareness of our faulty autopilot is the key. Humpty Dumpty loves autopilot, that way he can think about anything other than our current state, and it feels a little better, because he has already done a superb job of keeping us fearful and feeling like shit. So, we automatically doused the uncomfortable fires of our memories and anticipations with pre-programmed reactions.

Humpty Dumpty wants to do whatever the fuck he wants to do. He likes to solve problems quickly because he believes he "knows how to get it done." He likes anything that will inflate himself and ruminates on anything that threatens his identity. And, he really does not like it when Primo suggests any changes.

So, our mind strays off into La La Land while we are doing the same shit every day and wondering why nothing ever changes. We cannot observe this autopilot program while we are in it. It can only be viewed from Primo's perspective. This



perspective removes us from the frenzied world Humpty Dumpty has become accustomed to. Primo's perspective allows us to watch Humpty Dumpty's activities and better discern what's bullshit and what holds weight—or what matters.

I am full of examples. Here's another one.

Let's say our thoughts get out of hand as we begin to worry about not getting a job we recently applied for and we most desperately need. We lost the last job a whole month ago and funds are getting low. We begin to feel bad, worried. Our psyche becomes threatened. We might begin to fantasize about buying a bottle at the liquor store and look forward to some relief from our self-prescribed negative emotions.

Humpty Dumpty rationalizes the decision, "Why not? That company probably won't call anyway. You ain't gotta job. You ain't got shit to do."

As we walk through the liquor store doorway and enter the land of potions, a nagging tug in our chest tells us we're doing something wrong with this course of action (Primo). Our gut feeling is saying we don't need to do this, that it's not as bad as Humpty Dumpty says, if only we would take a breath and relax and get through the day.

But we ignore it and focus on the excuses that torment. Humpty Dumpty tells the stomach wisdom to shut up, and that if we don't get this discomfort *fixed* right away it will worsen more and more until *he* can't handle it, and that he will end up back at the liquor store later in the day regardless. Now we're simply panicking about future panic that doesn't even exist yet.

In this autopilot state, there is not much room for new decisions, or new ways of dealing with current emotions, because our attention is not even in the same time frame for making that decision, it's busy with future worries.

Well, golly gee willekers Batman, what happens if we get that phone call for an interview when we're three days deep in a drunken bender because we had nothing better to do while we waited? What if we show up to that interview with shaky hands, a forehead dripping with sweat, an odor of stale booze hinting from our pores, blood shot eyes, and a glowing red, hypertensive face? This kinda drastically reduces our odds of getting that job, wouldn't ya say? Might as well have another drink.

If we were to truly take a step back and practice keeping our thoughts in the moment, we can (almost scientifically) observe the fact that the thoughts which make us crazy are rarely about anything existing in that moment at all.

When we remain in autopilot, we tend to flee from any uncomfortable emotions and fake fears, then we distract our self from those fears with yet different fears or busy desires, like we're shoveling heaps of mental mischief on top of the moments we could be loving.

When in this state, we are participating in the exact opposite of love. We hate feeling bad about our thoughts and actions, therefore we are hating a part of our Self, because those thoughts and actions and residual emotions are us. No matter how they came about, they are inside us, we own them, they're our property.

Just because you let your house go to shit—refuse to mow the grass and it grows five feet tall, let the driveway crack, the paint peel, pipes rust, let the cat crap and piss all over the place, let friends steal all the furniture, and let family leave their garbage in the living room—does not mean it is not your house.

Likewise, if we hate a past memory of something that happened, like regretfully punching an innocent person in the face for no good reason, or some traumatic event that happened

to us—we just hate the emotion that’s attached to the thought we are having in that moment about it.

We don’t hate the ex-booty call who stole money from us while we were asleep, we hate the thought we are having about it during certain moments three years later. We hate how we feel about the specific memory when we remember it. When we aren’t remembering it, we’re fine.

We don’t hate the person who wronged us. We hate the emotional reaction that memory still triggers today. We don’t detest our never-ending to-do lists. We detest that we feel overwhelmed by them. This is what we have the power to change. We have the power to change how we understand any experience.

We have the power to change how we feel about an experience by changing the angle from which we look at it. This does not change the fact of whether it happened, it changes what we do with the experience. That’s one of Humpty Dumpty’s tricks, trying to hide the experience by stuffing it down into the subconscious body and pretending that it never happened. It’s a good defense mechanism, but eventually you become full of shit.

Self-dialogue (the storyline we repeat to our Self) is just like any dialogue we would exchange with another person. We must quit bullying our Self (Humpty Dumpty vs. Primo). We can choose to take Primo’s side and change which thoughts we focus on by time-traveling back to the present moment and leveling up our understanding of what is truly happening through simple observation of our mental activity through Primo’s eyes.

Try it someday when you find your Self all pissed-off and grumpy for no reason at all, like on a day you just woke up on the wrong side of the bed. Nobody died, nothing broke, there weren’t any fights, but you know you’re just in a shitty mood. When you notice this unreasonable mood, stop whatever you are

doing, go find a quiet place, and just sit there and watch your thoughts. Just look at them! And breathe, for like ten minutes. See what happens.

Here's a fun exercise for when you try.

Do the whole breath and relaxation thing for a couple minutes. Close your eyes, and when you do, imagine a theatre stage. Your thoughts are the actors. Now simply take another breath, exit the stage, and sit in one of the many empty chairs in the audience seating area. Now you're in the directors' chair.

You can see what all the actors are doing, even when they are performing patterns which do not benefit the play scene. Go ahead and morph into that irate movie director that yells at everyone, dismiss any of them, change their lines, dress them differently, and so on. Practice this until the only thing left on the set is what's within the room.

Once we practice staying inside our body, practice grounding our thoughts in the task at hand and our current surrounding conditions and behaviors, we are no longer time traveling. We are right here, right now. We are not wasting energy. We are intentionally aware, watching how we feel, what we are telling our Self (and determining if it's even true), and living in today's date, and not letting fake fears get us all riled up.

We don't need to be incessantly masterful about this. That would be unrealistic. I'm simply suggesting you give Primo a little more authority than she once had, now that we know she exists.

So, what about the big stuff? What about the clawing gremlins behind the mental mansion doors we deadbolted with twenty locks? Some of our memories got buried deep. We piled on a bunch of defenses and hid them from our current awareness.

These mechanisms were originally constructed for protection purposes, but many that remain no longer serve us.

They reside (are stored) within our subconscious body, and they are the forerunners of a largely underestimated portion of mental, and bodily illnesses. Ya know how they say too much stress makes you sick. Yeah, well, we can all say that stress is felt, because it's a bunch of frickin emotions, and they can make you sick as hell. Sometimes we don't even realize we're sick because they have been there so long, and even hell gets comfortable if you stay long enough.

These older, hidden memories are where we get our quirks from, where we get our reactions and reflexes to current life scenarios that we subconsciously associate as being the same as past experiences.

For instance, when we are untrusting of a new lover because we were jaded in the past by a different person. Now the question is, do we not trust the new lover, or do we not trust our own choices when selecting a new lover? Brain fuck! This might resonate if you've ever asked yourself the question, "Why do I keep dating the same crazy bitches?"

Some of these memories are deeper stab wounds. They may not have seemed to hurt very much when they were formed. We were most likely numb and drunk, or young and vulnerable when they happened. We quickly (automatically) hid the pain at the time. It's not our fault. I don't think we knew anybody with an ounce of emotional intelligence who could have taught us how to cope properly during those times.

After we have torn off the chemical band aids and begin to look at the damage, these wounds will be tender to the touch as we poke and test their sensitivity. Often, this top layer of pain is enough of a deterrent to keep us looking the other way

altogether, causing us to want to pull back our investigations and possibly cover it back up quickly. But these cuts must be tended to. They must be cleaned and not ignored so the body/mind/spirit can do what it was designed to do—heal and grow.

Otherwise, the cuts will fester and hurt more, and eventually cause us to drink and drug once again to protect Humpty Dumpty from his redundant fear of pain. Emotional pain from the past only hurts and threatens Humpty Dumpty. Primo is immune. In fact, Primo is the one who brings the pain. Primo is the healer, and she understands that pain is the only motivator strong enough to overcome fear. Therefore, pain is our friend. Just say, “Hi.”

Not all our memories are atrocious. Many were simply little things which we didn’t think mattered regarding our current behavior, those sneaky little patterns. The point of doing official work on our memories is to find the roots, causes, patterns, pain, and learn about the part **we** play in their existence today.

We process the emotion that’s tied to the memory (or prophecy). We willingly allow our self to feel it, and respond appropriately by crying, screaming, apologizing, kicking shit (responsibly), or altering our decision-making matrix so our subconscious body doesn’t need to keep bringing it back up with pop-up thoughts that make us cringe and medicate.

That’s why the thoughts keep haunting us! They are indicating to us all the things that need some attention and alteration. They just want to be heard! They just want to be viewed differently so our joy can increase. We sometimes call them a trigger because they make us feel bad. The word trigger is just a label used to describe something we haven’t learn how to handle properly yet, because we never needed to.

Whenever our hostage emotion attempted to escape the

dungeon of our body and yell for help we simply drugged it and threw it back down the stairs; then, when we fail at an attempt at sobriety, we blamed our unhealthy coping mechanisms on some petty “trigger”. While we were using, everything was a good excuse to use; and while we knew we were supposed to remain sober, every trigger was a good excuse to use again.

I just dropped the mic and walked off the stage.

Okay, I’m back.

The gremlins are there for a reason, but the reason is most definitely not to make us abuse drugs again. They are our check-engine light signaling us to fix something. Either by acknowledgement and acceptance, or by learning the lesson and ceasing repetition of the scenario.

Everyone knows what happens when we ignore the check-engine light on the dashboard of a vehicle for too long. Yeah, we’ll either need to fix a bunch of other things that were attached to the original malfunction, or the vehicle eventually breaks down.

You see, we learned to avoid the pain. This is one of the gag-gifts our culture has given us. You know as well as anyone else that we are all emotionally retarded. We were taught from an early age to curb our emotional states, that we should feel how other people tell us to feel, we should bottle it up, bury it, don’t talk about it, minimize it . . .

When we’re a child we are told, “Settle down, you’re too energetic . . . Don’t cry . . . You shouldn’t be upset . . . You should be happy . . . Sit still . . . Don’t do what mommy does . . . You don’t like that . . .”

When we are teenagers we are told, “You have nothing to be angry about . . . Repress all your biological drives so you don’t mess up your future . . . You’re ignorant, and have no idea how

the real-world works. . . You need to focus more on *this or that* . . . You need to believe \_\_\_\_\_. . . You need to continue to accept the lies of all the adults . . . Don't lash out . . . Life is going to kick your ass and you will learn to like it . . .”

As adults we're are told, “Men don't cry. But don't get angry and yell either. . . If you disagree with the politically correct, you will be silenced . . . You ain't shit unless you have \_\_\_\_\_ . . . The entire world is upside down and out to get you, so swallow this pill and get back to work . . . Keep it together . . . What will others think? . . . Speak this way. . . That's “unprofessional” . . . Raise your children this way. . .”

Fuck! All! That!

Whether this conditioning was intended to help us function better in society, or not, it was still done. Natural emotions were stifled, and psychological messages were crisscrossed to the extent of many people becoming, almost irreversibly, uncomfortable in their own skin.

We have emotions for a reason, and they are natural. Our emotions have been systematically buried beneath passive conditioning and a hundred styles of medication, but they will still express themselves regardless—either through psychosis, neurosis, halitosis, disease, addiction, or hurting others.

We already have all the healing mechanisms we need at our disposal. We were born with them, they are innate. We simply need to delete some old junk-files and let our natural abilities operate how they were designed to.

This is where it helps a great deal to begin working with other people. Anyone can read books alone. Anyone can go to the gym, cook healthy food, or meditate alone. The one thing you can't do alone is listen to your Self without Humpty Dumpty screening-



out the undesirable truths with the preexisting filters he devised from all the experiences (or brainwashing and defense mechanisms) he accumulated over the span of your life. It's difficult to call bullshit on yourself because you can't see it—until you get more practice.

Working on our Self, by our self, is not how we were designed. **Self-help** is a sales term that targets Humpty Dumpty. Humans are social creatures. We need other humans (not drinking buddies) to mirror what our behaviors are (compared to what we say) back to us, so we don't lie too much (to our Self) and self-destruct, thus effecting the herd. Simply put, other people can help us smash that fifty-foot thick concrete wall Humpty Dumpty has built with his misdirected intention to protect the one thing that can save us.

After we dig some stuff up, and let'em bake out in the sun for a bit, it's time to give our Self the gift of forgiveness and understanding. Forgiveness is difficult until we look at situations with a different light. Well, our dollar-store flashlight totally sucks, so let's try using someone else's lamp. Preferably someone's light who has already been through the same maze of barbed wire trenches you're now attempting to trudge through. Someone who can put themselves in your shoes and understand the shades of darkness in your mind without judgments.

Imagine you're in a graveyard digging up the coffin of an ancient mummy monster. For one, it's easier to continue digging when there's a couple people there to encourage you when you get tired of the task and want to quit. Once your shovel hits the coffin, and it's time to open it—not knowing what crazed demons lay in wait—don't you think it would be easier and safer with some backup? Plus, the motivation to even do so is amplified in groupthink because everybody's doing it.

We already know that ninety percent of the population has absolutely no idea what it's like to be an alcoholic, addict, bipolar, or whatever. So, let's find the people who are actively working on the same topic as us. Collaborate with them, join forces, and become stronger in numbers. Yes, people do share energy, and sometimes we need to borrow some.

We are only a human. If we were to get lost inside a vast jungle alone, we are quite helpless physically and mentally. Unless your name is John Rambo, we would most likely die of worry and despair before we became prey to a jungle creature. But, get a group of us together and . . . well, we're humans, so we'd probably end up burning the whole place down, but you get my point about power in numbers.

This is the reason why we eventually gave in to those "cultish" support group meetings (cult is short for culture). Because when we are in a group, we become more focused, more task orientated. The group focuses the energy on the shared goal, and it's a natural way to shift our mindset from Humpty Dumpty to Primo.

You see, we were able to do everything else on our own. We could get our physical body back in good shape. We became an expert on health and wellness. We could psychoanalyze just about anyone, if they let us, including our Self. We found our individual power of focused will, but we had no accountability for our intentions behind the magic.

We managed to stave off the riff raff and banished the party for long periods of time. We did all these things we thought a healthy person does, and we felt great, but we would still relapse despite all our efforts because our doors were still closed. There was still this specific type of energy Humpty Dumpty kept blocking off. We were locked within a room inside our mind, a

recluse in our own mental mansion, working on sobriety alone instead of working on living with open honesty. To be openly honest you need to share your truth with others.

We didn't have enough connection to enough people who had the expertise and experience to help guide us through the parts of the maze we didn't know we didn't know about—the dark alleys and thorny vine laced crawl spaces that were the routes to get out. It's not that we didn't talk to people every day, it was that those people were in different mazes than us. They were not Addicts.

Who were our best buddies at the bar? The ones who were on our level, tuned into the same frequency, achieving our same level of wasted. If we saw someone who was equally messed up as us at a house party, we might become instant friends and spend hours drinking and talking about how screwed up the world is. It's the exact same with sober Alcoholics. (I know I repeat myself a lot. It's kinda the way the human brain learns new concepts, by repetition. Sorry, not sorry.)

Alcoholics and Addicts connect like magnets whether we are drunk or sober. We know this because, even after being sober for a while, we can still spot a practicing addict in a crowd from a mile away.

That's why I push the habitual connection to a support group. The meetings are where the drunks are, they're just sober now, but still kindred and willing to help us get and stay sober, keep us having fun, and provide a setting which allows us to help others in recovery. Where else are we going to find a group of people with wisdom about our struggle; and even more, reminders of what can happen if we start lying to our self again.

You might be wondering why I'm rambling about Meetings when I'm supposed to be clarifying the path of self-love through

time and space. Why the incessant harping on the support group strings again?

Because, in these groups, a safe-space-bubble is formed which makes it easier to beam into the present moment. This space is the warm-up for Primo. It's why everyone feels so good when they leave a meeting. It's why the anxiety and depression vanish for a couple hours while we're there.

We are connecting, without judgment of others and our self, and this is all love is, a strong connection.

When we are in a support group meeting room we connect with our senses. We absorb what others are saying as we listen. We exchange our deeper thoughts when it's our turn to speak, and we get to hear our thoughts out loud. We share the vibes of the room and feel the hugs and handshakes. We see everyone's appearance, their facial expressions, smiles, tears, and ketchup stained sweatpants. We smell the fresh aromas of low-grade coffee, doughnuts, cigarettes, and cheap perfume. We are present in that room, fully engulfed by our senses. Our attention is focused on something other than our crazy time-traveling thoughts. Even if we are speaking about something from another timeframe, we are sharing it in that room and in that moment.

Another part of this love connection is letting down our guard, and the meetings are the perfect place for this practice because we are all in the same boat. We know we can't talk to just anyone and everyone about our dark side.

If we were stranded on a boat in the middle of the ocean with a group of people, nobody cares if someone needs to piss off the side of the boat (unless they're downwind). Nobody minds if you're scared. Nobody cares what others will think if they call you out on a displayed character flaw. Nobody cares if you sob out your life story. While in that boat, nobody has a choice but

to be raw and human. The group is safe. Everyone shares. Everyone has spilled the beans. And everyone has lived the horrors.

You go to these meetings, find a person who has undergone the program with someone else who has shown them how it's done, properly (we tend to look for shortcuts). Sometimes they are called a sponsor, mentor, guide, coach, or whatever you want to call them. A person who, at some point, encourages you to list all the vampiristic thoughts eating away at you.

Then you sit down with this person and scientifically look at all your ghosts and goblins objectively, through Primo's eyes. The program is helping you look at your Self, look at Humpty Dumpty, look at what you did and what you are doing now, without judgement, without emotional attachment, and with the complete intention of finding *your* part in the current problem so you can become part of the solution. You are observing it all, as an outsider. No longer reliving and repressing the past but working on it as if it were a project.

This is your initiation, your invitation for Primo to join you in your daily life. After you get a taste of what she can do, how she can change your entire world by giving you a different lens to look at it through, you can more easily manage anything new that comes your way instead of reacting to life in the same automatic ways as before. You can now subvert outdated programming and manage how you feel about your thoughts properly.

If you ignore this priceless tool of using others to navigate the maze—a maze which you have not been able to figure out on our own so far—you will continue to fear the darkness that resides within and avoid it. Then throw up your arms, cross your eyes, and bobble your head in confusion as to why your behavioral

patterns persist as you continue to time-travel and can't figure out why you're not finding where all the love is hidden. Things best hidden are often in plain sight.

## Tips, Tricks, and Hacks

We don't necessarily need to go to specific support group meetings to find our tribe, it's just easier. Just like we would choose to go to a bar to find other drinkers and not the library, or the fact that we wouldn't go to the dope house for a glass of milk.

A bar or a dope house is a meeting place for the purchase and use of drugs. Sobriety focused support group meetings are a place people go to refresh how to get through life sober. That's the score.

Besides, life gets busy. Keeping in touch and staying connected in a healthy fashion with people on a regular basis isn't exactly our strong suit. When we attend these meetings—some of which are established everywhere and anywhere, like a fast-food chain—we don't need to call anyone and set a date, we don't need to spend money or cook a dinner, we simply get to show up.

Something we should have been told from the beginning is that the purpose of looking into our past is not to reopen it so we can desensitize our feelings about it through exposure, and it's not for closure either. The purpose is most definitely not to get rid of it, or "let it go". That's all psycho-babble bullshit.

The purpose is to see what has been happening. What was happening was that we were creating the whole show. We are looking at our part in it, and how our character reacts to situations.

Even when a ghostly memory was something someone else did to us, when we were atrociously wronged, what did we do

with that experience? What part did we have in the aftermath? Did we keep it alive for years later? Did keeping it alive affect our life and the people around us? Are we keeping it alive today?

The purpose for doing the work on our past is simply to realize we are the author of damn near all of it. When this is realized, we know that if we had a big part in writing and directing that past storyline, we have the author(ity) to change the direction of the plot, and write a better second half of the book.

The scary part is not what happened to us. We relive what happened all the time anyway. The reason no one wants to do this part of the healing process is because (before we consciously know it) on some level we knew we were responsible for its current effect on our life, and it's difficult to face the shame because we already feel bad. It's like avoiding doctor visits because you know the guy in the white coat will tell you about your lifestyle and the issues that came as a result from it.

If we refuse to mend our past, it's not because we don't have the time, or because it's not *that* bad, or we think it unnecessary because it's time to forget the past and move forward. It's because we still possess guilt and shame.

Guilt is feeling bad about what we did, and it's a good thing. It means we still have morals and ethics, and we are still human. The only way to get rid of the guilt is to remember the incidences, face them, accept them, and own them by telling the universe and another human about what we did or what has happened to us and how we dealt with it. Only after doing this are we capable of shedding the emotions attached to it and stored inside our body.

Through this action the emotional nemesis is pulled from the



shadow and brought into the physical world where it can be killed by forgiveness and understanding like a vampire in sunlight. By abolishing our ignorance of the dark side within, we slice the ties of karma, and are no longer bound to re-experience the lesson in our mind and reality.

Shame happens when we believe we are a bad person. Everyone has experienced shame at some point in their lives. But we are now rebuilding our persona, creating a new persona from scratch, a better persona than the one we were shameful of.

Our true nature is light. Once we clear away some of the big piles of wreckage from our past, our light will shine through the cracks and pixilate to reveal a new Self, (actually, only the part of our self that was hidden. It was always there waiting for you to get your shit together.)

Feeling neither guilt nor shame is a big indication you're still entertaining your Addict thinking, entertaining your victimhood. You continue to make rationalizations, minimalizations, delusional comparisons, and justify your situations so you can continue practicing the maladapted behaviors ... just sayin.

Sobriety programs, along with many religious traditions, have an ingenious way of accomplishing this psychological housecleaning—if it is done by-the-book and not half-assed. Meaning, we need a person who knows what the hell they're doing to show us how.

We initially tried to sweep the past up under the rug in our own self-prescribed, easy, softer way. We told the wife a few of the bad things we did, told a close friend some too, journaled, meditated, told our Self we had a good soul, and tried to forgive

our Self for our past when the thoughts arose.

It wasn't until we tried a program (one which we didn't create alone) that the plan worked the way it was supposed to. That's the beginning of belief in a power greater than your ego.

## CHAPTER 4

### From Hero to Zero

*But I don't wanna be an Earthling*

*- Yours Truly*

#### Time Period: Early Recovery

*After a good search, I found a support group I like. I get along great with most of the members. It took a while; I hated the first five meetings I tried out. I almost gave up, but then I dragged my ass out of my house one day when I was bored and visited a meeting at a place I had been to before, but this meeting was held at a different time of day, and was a whole different set of people.*

*We all go out for Taco Tuesdays and just take over the place, laughing and raging like we're at a party. There are plenty of planned sober events to attend, and even the most socially awkward members feel comfortable enough to mingle and practice interacting in such a community with zero judgments about how messed up we all are. A real "ye without sin cast the*

*first stone” type mentality. We help each other get through rough spots, encourage each other to do the steps, and there are always people there waiting to help anyone who walks through the doors.*

*But what about when I’m out in the real world? I started drinking to make socializing comfortable and find a place where I fit in. It’s easy to be myself around a bunch of sober misfits like me, but what about blending with the people who don’t know my little secret?*

*Sometimes, I’m invited—more like expected—by a relative or a friend to attend events like weddings. The receptions typically have open bars. There are high school reunions, and those are usually held at bars too. At dinner parties, everyone gets to loosen up with a few refreshments while I just sit there sipping my soda. I see the others side-glancing at my drink of choice. They repeat their offers of an alcoholic beverage to me when they sense my uneasiness, not realizing that I have quit; or worse, they know I have, and the only way they know how to help relieve my discomfort is to hand me a hard drink when nobody’s looking and whisper something like, “It’s alright to have just one or two.”*

*It’s everywhere, and I am expected to have a good time while I watch everyone enjoying the blisses of my lost love. I find myself avoiding these events just as much as I avoided non-drinking events before I quit. I can’t hide forever.*

*I feel so uncomfortable when I’m obligated to attend a drinking function, and sometimes I’m in a vulnerable state and know I shouldn’t be there at all. Nobody knows it, but sometimes, not all the time, but sometimes, there’s a tornado tearing through my inner landscape. Nevertheless, I am expected to smile and enjoy the party.*

*I’m a different person now, but still, I don’t feel one hundred*

*percent Me, still not completely comfortable in my new skin. There's a split. One half of me wants to stay healthy and sober, but the other half wants to show these people how it's done.*

*Sometimes I miss the attention, the feeling of being the life of the party. Joining in on all the silliness, stupidity, and thrills used to be my thing. In fact, I instigated most of the crazy antics, and people seemed to love me for it. If someone wanted to have a good time, I was the one they made sure was at the top of their call list.*

*Now that I'm sober, my phone rarely rings. I feel like I'm the boring one, like I lost all my mojo. These days, some people avoid me, and others still offer me drinks to see if there's still a little bit of the old Me in there. I don't dance anymore. I don't know how to get laid now. It was so easy to talk to girls before, you know, the prospective ones (wink, wink).*

*I miss the fun times, the excitement, the cool stories, the involvement in what everyone else is doing. But no, sober Me needs to leave the party before it starts, then hear the fun stories the next day from friends who stayed. Sometimes, they wait until I'm gone so they can drink guilt-free. I can see the impatience on their faces evaporate when I announce I'm about to leave.*

*In addition, I worry if my partner will continue to like the sober version of Me. I can be irritable and boring sometimes. Same with my friends. Do I need to ditch all my friends who drink? It's hard to hang out and not partake in their vibes. It's hard to watch others get wasted, watch them get to do what I can't. I try to tell myself they are not really having a good time, that it's chemically induced fakery, but I know I'm not having as much fun as they are. Who am I when I've lost my razzle-dazzle?*

## Time Period: Present Day, and Sober

There's no way around it. It's a bitch to watch other people do something you lust for, like an NBA all-star turned paraplegic watching someone dunk a basketball. It's time to turn up your esteem game.

Think about it this way. Those people think they need to be medicated to socialize with others, anesthetize after a long hard week, need a drug to loosen up, want to feel another way than they normally do. They think they need an enhancer to enjoy themselves. They need to drink to feel comfortable, to laugh, to dance—just as we once did. This is indeed a handicap, not a strength.

Ultimately, they are escaping their own life, for a short while, by means of manually manipulating their mood with toxic chemicals—and there is nothing wrong with that. Unfortunately, we don't have this luxury.

But try looking closer at the crowd. There are also people who are not drinking. Maybe they are playing with the children or engaged in a good conversation over in the corner, there's probably even some on the dance floor. They are there. They just weren't on our radar in early recovery because we had conditioned our Self to look for something else in the room, something that was normal to us, something that seems normal to almost everyone, even normal to non-problem drinkers..

We weren't interested in what those tea pots were tipping. We were on such a different wavelength and on such a different mission we couldn't even see they were in the vicinity, or we didn't care. But believe it or not, these people, who are not drinking to get drunk, or not drinking at all, are in attendance

and having fun.

They too get weird looks and off-comments from the member of the Drinking herd, but they're used to it. This is a reaction they've become accustomed to from a different herd of people, a herd you were once a part of, and now you are not.

That's what stings so much. You were once part of the Drinker herd, you were one of the Drinkers, and now you are not. You are now a part of a new herd, and it's the herd you once looked down upon, thought of as weak, damaged, and boring. It's the herd you hoped you would never need to sit with at the lunch table. Bummer, I know.

Nevertheless, if we are working on sobriety, getting through life without drugs, and finding new ways to have fun without them—and if there truly are no such people other than the Drinkers in the room—we need to get the hell out. Leave that party. That is not the place for us. It's not a sign of weakness to leave this type of scene when in early recovery. It's wisdom.

We must remember to be observant of our Self, and our surroundings (never drive with your eyes closed). But, keep in mind, these engagements can sometimes be a good place for introspection.

What's really bothering us? Is it that there's some alcohol in the building, or is it the people who are getting shit-face wasted to a level that makes our gums water? Do the people sitting at tables with two-hour old drinks missing only two sips freak us out, or is it the wild ones who appear to not have a single care in the world as they stumble about and tear a hamstring while attempting to do the splits on the dance floor while holding a cup in each hand?

What really bothers us about it? Were we weak, exhausted,

stressed, already thirsty when we got there? Is it just the presence of the booze bottles, or the people who are getting high? Where is the real draw for us? Anyone can say they know something is a trigger, but what is it about the place, those people, or how we see them, that gets us all hot and bothered specifically? A trigger can only cause a problem if the gun is loaded.

If we are honest when somebody asks us if we want a drink we would say, “No, I don’t want a drink. One drink does nothing for me. I would like ten drinks, please.” Even back in early recovery, being around a little alcohol never bothered us, normal drinkers never bothered us. It was extreme drinking which bothered us. It was the act of witnessing people heavily altering their moods that triggered our urges, especially when our gun was loaded with loneliness, exhaustion, frustrations, or a poor diet.

Since I know you probably have no clue what Normal Drinking looks like, this might be a good place to discuss it.

According to the internet, “low risk” drinking for women is no more than seven standard drinks per week, with no more than three in one day. For men, it’s no more than fourteen standard drinks per week, with no more than four in one day.

Doesn’t sound so bad, right? Looks like everything’s under control, right? This is not what normal drinking looks like. These are the numbers for “low risk drinking”. Low risk of what? Developing a problem? Remember how many drinks it took for THIQ to join the party?

What we find with people who truly don’t depend on alcohol to manage their mood (Normies) is that it’s the last thing on their minds, unless they had a severely fucked up day or week, or it’s a special occasion and they’re not driving. Other than that, drinking is rarely in their plans. Drinking is not in their weekly



routine, not even small amounts.

They go to an event and if they feel like having a drink or two, they do, and they are totally happy with just a couple of drinks once in a blue moon. They are the ones who maybe drink once or twice per month, and even then, it's a couple, or a few drinks maximum. This is not because they need to set a limit. These people don't need to set rules for their drinking at all. Unbelievable, huh? These people do exist. Yeah, they probably have different vices they use for coping with stress, but it's usually not as lethal as yours was for us.

Here's another hum dinger for ya. Believe it or not, some folks, who had never-ever had a drinking problem, decide it's an unhealthy practice and choose to not drink at all. Mind blowing, I know!

Nevertheless, to the masses, drinking is a completely normal, acceptable, and **expected** behavior. Many would even claim it to be an essential for surviving this insane world. It's a common thread woven through almost every aspect of social life, so much so, that its presence is taken for granted, kinda like oxygen.

Everyone learns from a young age that one of the best ways to interface with their environment is by adding this magical potion to the mix: to have more fun, relax, elevate, or alleviate emotions, mourn, deal with stress, pain, celebrate, and all the other things we observed other people using it for while we were growing up.

As children, we saw adults drinking at fairs, picnics, vacations, and most social functions. We saw them do it when they were stressed. We saw them do it to sleep. We saw them do it at dinner. We saw them doing it almost everywhere there were adults present past 6 p.m., and for a multitude of purposes. It persists in movies, commercials, magazines, billboards, and is glorified in music as well—oh and don't forget social media.

Then stress builds throughout our teenage years as responsibilities increase and life lessons become more serious. The drinking program had already been installed in our mind by the grownups for accommodating such discomforts. Additionally, the curiosity about the power of this magical potion blooms alongside the relentless pressure to fit-in and satisfy our primal need to be included in a group; and obviously, the act of drinking is often used to do so. This is completely self-evident when I say the two terms High School and College, and I'm willing to bet when these two terms are spoken: homework, tests, and debt are not the only things that come to mind when it comes to the social experiences associated with these institutions.

It makes no difference whether what we observed throughout our entire development was responsible drinking or not. The message is still engraved in stone that the act of drinking is a common and normal way to mend and enhance the experiences in life.

And that's only addressing alcohol. I haven't even touched on psychiatric meds, weed, coffee, tobacco, screen time, and all the other drugs the masses use regularly to manage their lives. That would be the all-encompassing program we all downloaded: to throw a drug at each-and-every problem we have.

The fact remains that the act of drinking, whether it negatively impacts an individual's life or not, is an obsession that is shared by the masses.

This becomes a problem when we sober up because the obsession is still unknowingly held by so many people around us. It doesn't disappear. We still feel the pressure. And since we were forced to escape this universal obsession, we need to find something to replace it, just like *it* had replaced whatever allowed us to enjoy life before the drugs came along; or, at least before we

started using drugs to get along.

Since we have stopped using drugs to enhance good times, it does not mean we are now becoming a new person. We are becoming the old Us, reemerging—the former Us we forgot—the person who existed before the shit got weird and tough—the Child.

The Us who dared for adventure but ran into more and more danger around every corner of age. The younger Us who had been molded by layers of casting from the rigors of our life. Some of these patches of plaster we acquired over the years simply developed into coping mechanisms that simply went awry in some way.

Therefore, we call our substance abuse a symptom of an underlying problem, underlying the armored casts we built around the Child, a problem hidden within those layers of molding to protect that which is most precious.

Ever wonder why people can't wait for the weekend to get lit and act like a care-free kid for a little while? On some level, they are attempting to reemerge with their Child nature, but most need a short-cut because two days isn't enough time to unwind from weeks, or years, worth of adulting.

Acceptance is the key here. Not the acceptance that we're an Alcoholic and can no longer drink, but acceptance that we are human and becoming self-aware. Acceptance of the fact that the only thing holding us back from interacting with others, and sharing the proverbial chisel for our molds is a social phobia which can be practiced away with exposure to new vibrational states, a.k.a. people who can have a good time without using magic potions.

Yeah, we may need to start talking to different people, but why not? Yeah, the Drinkers are going to look at us funny and

maybe talk some trash, but so what? Yeah, the dynamics will change with our significant other, or the people we choose to date, or the friends we once spent a lot of time drinking with, but this is most likely not a bad thing if we had been making decisions which lead us down a dark path.

Don't fight the changes. They will be unfamiliar, a little uncomfortable, but only at first, and only for as long as we let them. We can easily overcome this discomfort when we think back to how bad withdrawals felt. Now THAT shit was uncomfortable. If we can get through withdrawals, we can get through a couple conversations at a light party.

Socializing while sober takes a little (authentic) courage, like when we were just a wee whipper snapper and tried to kiss our first girlfriend on the lips, or when we pumped our pedals towards the biggest bicycle jump we had ever attempted.

Is there risk? Could the girl turn her head the other way? Could we crash on the landing? Hell yeah! But we gave it a shot. It was a thrill of life! And if it didn't work, we tried with someone else or hit another jump later. We learned to cope with a fail if it came, by accepting it and moving on. Trophies don't come every day you know.

Just like when we were a child, people will judge us more on what we didn't try. The girl will tell her friends that we never tried to kiss her. Our childhood homies would have said we chickened-out on that big jump and sat on the side-lines. How does this relate to living sober and interacting with others? Let me put it this way: even the Drunks will be jealous if they see us having fun while sober. Any teasing we receive only comes from their insecurity.

Accept that we must try to socialize in a different way. Meet as many new people as possible. Some we will like, and some

we'll want to punch in the throat (not much different than when we were using at a party, except now we might refrain from really doing it).

Interactions are where our stories are written. Our interactions with friends and associates are significant enough to influence the direction of our life. Let's be careful how we choose them. Some can be positive and supportive, and some can be the ones who offer us that drink when we are most vulnerable, like after having a real tough week and feeling tired and hungry or in a low mood and easily impulsed to reach for it. So, we learn to filter relationships wisely, and **not** on the premise of who we think might be the most fun.

The more people we befriend, the more artillery we have when the battle arises again. Let's be a little mature about it. We might need to let some relationships go, or maintain them from a faraway distance, and some we will need to create.

It's fun to meet new people. Why did we start partying in the first place? To get fucked up and *meet new people* to get fucked up with. Now, we weed out the dangerous ones and create a library of personalities to choose from and enjoy life with.

Be honest. Let that sexy date of yours know we don't stay at these drinking types of social events late into the night. Own that responsibility. If they think you're a lamo, fuck'em (but not literally)! No sober Alcoholic has any business staying at a place where there's heavy consumption of the spirits past nine or ten. That is not a test you want to try to pass too many times. And why would you try? Oh, that's right, that was what we lived for. Shit, I guess things've changed. But guess what, we are still alive and getting healthier and feeling better every day.

Be awesome, or not. There are millions of awesome, and not so awesome people out there who will be more than happy to

chill and hang-out. First let's take some time to reacquaint our self with Us, then say, "Okay, this is me. Let's go find my people." With this raw acceptance of Self, it will not take long before we find out our clansmen, and women, are everywhere. Loneliness is a choice.

## Tips, Tricks, and Hacks

Here's the trap. In the early stages of our recovery, we still resonated at the same vibration as when we were using. The types of people we once hung out with were still the people we attracted and were attracted to. We were still attracted to the same type of sexual partner. We were still attracted to the same environments. We were still attracted to the same social company—even though we were sober.

Since you're now exploring a new and unfamiliar world, it's only a natural inclination to grasp at familiarity. Because of this inclination, to anchor to the familiar, we must stave off some emotions and urges for certain types of people and places we automatically magnetized to. We must use more of our logic to choose the company which best suites our long-term goal of sober living. Our decisions about people are no longer based upon primal urges, but instead, they're intended to assemble a team to help us survive this insane world and experience natural joys.

We don't need to ditch all our old drinking buddies. If we stick to our guns, remain sober, and do sober things, most of them will fade away on their own accord. Not because they were bad friends, but because the common interest that bonded us and them together was lost, and there's nothing wrong with that.

If we are lucky, we might be posing as an example for a future buddy in recovery, maybe a member of our old party clique, one who might have drank themselves to death unless they witnessed someone close to them sobering up.

I will repeat what I stated earlier. Sobered people—who are maturing past the age that marks the start of their drug abuse to manage their emotions—have no business staying out past ten! We have better things to do! Nothing good ever happens past ten! This habit of staying up late, or staying out late, has a way of affecting our health in sneaky subtle ways. Whether these late nights end up jacking around our sleep schedule, causing us to watch too much bad T.V., or keeping us within arm's reach of the night-lifestyle—it doesn't matter which health related tight rope you want to wobble on—go home, go to bed!

In the beginning, it would be wise to limit our exposure to people who are drinking in any amount, or establishments where drinking is present, simply because it is difficult to predict who will be attending a function when there is booze involved.

We might feel fine in a room full of normal drinkers, but we never know when someone like Ol' Boozey Ben might pop-in through the door, sit down next to us, and tap our knee with his flask under the table. That's how slimy and slick this little devil can be.

We may be strong enough to avoid the initial seduction the first few instances something like this happens, but temptation also builds over time with repeated exposure. Like repeatedly exposing yourself to an ad that suggests you order that pizza today, one day you will be hungry and lazy, and order that pizza, unless it hasn't been in your diet for a substantial amount of time.

Sober communities have tons of things to do. It's a community, as in groups of sober folks. An essential part of all sobriety programs is to make it fun. If it's not fun, then we probably wouldn't do it.



Those flyers you see on the walls of support group meeting rooms advertising that spaghetti dinner, Roundup, barbeque potluck, or whatever, may sound boring at first. That's just the old Humpty Dumpty talking. You will quickly come to realize Alcoholics and Addicts can party anywhere and at any time, even the sober ones. It's kinda part of our DNA.

## CHAPTER 5

### Old Wool Sweater

*Chickity check yo self before you wreck yo self.*

*- Ice Cube*

#### Time Period: Early Recovery

*Despite my fresh desire to stay clean, I've had a few relapses in the past year. Even though the slips were short-lived and few and far between, I'm sick and tired of getting my life going in a good direction and working so hard, only to fall off and take five steps backwards.*

*As much as I wanted to blame the sobriety program for not working—the same program I had entered into with such excitement in the beginning—after some brutal honesty with myself I came to realize I wasn't doing what was recommended of me.*

*All the instructions are written in the literature, and they seemed basic enough, so I was going through them by myself. I never sought out a mentor and met with them regularly. I was only attending meetings when I felt like it. Hell, I didn't even*

*execute half of the steps before quickly losing interest for some reason.*

*Looking back, my meeting attendance would dwindle down to zero as my focus shifted from my recovery to the things I deemed more necessary at the time. Things like working longer hours, trying my hand at dating again, and just playing the catch-up game and getting on with my life as if my addiction never happened.*

*I think I sometimes get to the point where I feel good enough to meet the pressures, to achieve some degree of normalcy within one or two of the listed cultural roles I see others maintaining.*

*I'm not getting any younger. I want nice things too, like a good home, awesome wife, and a car that was born in this decade.*

*Realizing the flaw in the lack of my participation, I can't blame a program I barely even tried. I let the mistake dissipate, along with that certain segment of my ego, and walked back through those Meeting doors once again, ready to learn, and determined to do it the right way this time. Thankfully, everyone was happy to have me back.*

*Now, I've got a few months of sobriety under my belt . . . again. Things are much better than they were before, but I can still feel it. I can still feel that itch I get about every three or four months into my sobriety. That itch I get when I'm exhausted and overwhelmed by life's constant stream of to-do lists and side winders. That Itch I get when life starts to resist my will and my impatience ensues.*

*The more episodes of sobriety I experience, the more I can see I have some other defects that need a little fixing, some character flaws to work on that trend with some of my behaviors. I am noticing there are patterns leading up to my relapses. When my stress levels escalate, it shows in the form of other bad habits like*

*eating chocolate, masturbation, or biting on the bait of negative public/political topics and bitching about them to no end. They get me by, but I know I'm still using them to evade something.*

*But those damn urges! They're so unpredictable and they foam up at the most random times like a shaken bottle of soda a friend hands to you for a gag. I know what my triggers are, we listed those way back in treatment. There's no possible way to avoid them all. I feel like I am doing everything I can, but occasionally a craving just knocks me upside my head.*

*That little Mr. Drunky voice still whispers in my ear sometimes too, as if my brain is haunted, like the demon still resides on my shoulder waiting for me to be vulnerable. How long until that goes away? Does it go away? Once the thoughts about picking up again enter my mind, it starts an exhaustive internal battle of wills. It's such an annoying fucking hassle! Are the cravings always going to be there? Is this just something I will always have to live with?*

*If history repeats itself, I'll just relapse again. I've done it so many times before, and I'm scared that all of this is only going to eventually land me in the inevitable, drunken puddle. I often doubt this thing is going to work—or even worse, it does work, and I'm left living the rest of my life with no reprieve from bad feelings. All I want to do is feel like a normal person and lead a better life than before. I get so frustrated and wonder why I have this curse.*

## Time Period: Present Day, and Sober

I'm not gonna lie, there will be some aftershocks. They can pop up sporadically and for an undisclosed amount of time while we improve and strengthen our emotional intelligence and coping skills. If we stick with doing the things we know we're supposed to do, if we learn to listen to Primo more often than the devil on our shoulder, and stay out of the trap of only doing what we feel like doing, the cravings become less and less intense and easier to overcome.

Also, if you count the frequency of your impulses, and compare it to the bombardment of those impulses you had when you first sobered up, you can recognize your progress. Once again, this is part of being aware, only achievable by staying in the current timeframe, and sometimes comparing it to the past so we can see how far we've come.

We are reprogramming our brain and entire nervous system—it's kind of a big deal. Each time we successfully allow the cravings to pass it dulls that specific bio-neural pathway; the process from trigger to thought, to feeling about the thought, to deciding how to manage that feeling with a behavior.

Switching the course, or switching our reflex-reaction to the Crave, makes it weaker and strengthens another pathway to whatever we decide to do in its place, in that moment (and repeat). Hopefully, the new pathway is a healthy one, and not just a "less toxic" habit like chocolate, sex, conspiratorial rabbit holes, collecting toenail clippings, or some other crazy shit. (That was a joke. Don't worry, you don't start collecting toenails.)

Where we once amplified our cravings with thoughts and actions, we now disintegrate the craving with planned

alternatives: planned and practiced thoughts and actions that change how we are feeling in the moment.

It doesn't need to be an extravagant alternative. It can be as simple as streaming our favorite song, chewing some gum, dropping to the floor and pumping out a few pushups, or taking a deep breath and grounding.

I recommend practicing with the little things to start. Practice with small predicaments that don't necessarily make you want to chug a gallon of vodka but would normally irk you just enough to veer the day on a path you don't want.

Are the crazy drivers on highway 694 causing some agitation? Maybe choose to move to the slow lane and pull the reigns on yourself. Maybe chew that piece of warm gum in your pocket. Maybe pull off the freeway entirely and take the scenic route. Maybe turn on that favorite song and take a few deep breaths (sing) instead of swearing up a storm and turning red in the face and making that vein throb on your forehead as if there isn't going to be another asshole driver a mile down the road.

After a little practice, we realized how much control we really have over our emotional reactions to the outside world. It's kinda nice. All these smaller practices like in traffic, or maybe a visit with the in-laws, or maybe a work-related criticism, will prepare us for when we need to push the heavy weight, the big stuff, the best strengtheners.

The best weightlifting machines in this metaphorical gym are the situations when the proverbial shit hits the fan and splatters all over our face. When life really throws an unfair hum dinger our way.

The small successes train us to deal with the big stuff. It's hard to bench press 200 lbs. if we've never practiced with something lighter. These successes are the steroids for our esteem muscles,

and the cornerstones for self-faith as they become a tangible source of positive evidences that reinforce our resilience to bullshit that doesn't really matter long-term. It's in-our-face proof we can do it again and again and again.

Before you know it, there will be a day when you get a flat tire, late for work, forgot your lunch, get a notice under your apartment door saying the cost of your rent is going up fifty dollars, and your new reflex reaction to this type of day will look something like, "the tire is easy to fix, I have a nice job, I needed to diet anyway, and my apartment is worth it." What the Fuck! Who thinks this way?

We're building a control-switch because we never had one. At some point we began to control our emotions with our drug—it took care of everything. Our addiction took care of any negative feelings: boredom, disappointment, failure, betrayal, inferiority, anxiety, anger, confusion. It was all easily managed with our medication, and that's when our emotional maturation stopped because it was not needed—at the time.

During this pause of maturation, a pile of unlearned lessons accumulated, a large gap of growth between when we started abusing the drug and when we stopped. During this gap, our emotional lessons were in limbo while more and more responsibilities and experiences, which would have normally strengthened our psychological immunity to the rigors of everyday life, added up.

Then, by the time we quit, we had grown-up responsibilities, grown-up schedules, grown-up bills, grown-up sorrow, grown-up consequences, but only the emotional management level of a sixteen-year-old to deal with it all. We needed to build from where we left off all those years ago. And that's why staying stopped is so hard. This was the real problem when it came to

sustaining sobriety. It wasn't so much the pull of the drug, but the frustration of dealing with the onslaught of the life stress we had skipped leg day on.

Pushing through a craving is easy. Shit, quitting is easy. Dealing with all this other crap is the tough coconut. It's the equivalent to learning how to operate a vehicle by only reading the drivers manual. You never got behind the wheel, never drove with an instructor, never even ridden in that car before, and now you are being asked to drive in rush hour traffic through a big city, where of which you don't even know the roads, all alone, and everyone expects you to drive your ass home without freaking out or crashing, then be calm when you arrive.

We controlled how we felt with our drug, but this form of control does expire over time, just like any tool we would buy in a store and use it to fix everything, even the things it wasn't intended for. It wears out. But, if you don't have any things to fix, then you don't need a tool. Just kidding, I don't even know what that means. What I do know is that stress is always going to happen, and since our old tool no longer gets the job done, we need new tools. But tools are no good to us if we only pick them up once, tinker a bit, then leave'em on a shelf to collect dust and forget they're there.

Our new tools are things like going to groups, collecting and maintaining things we love, self-care, refraining from letting our social supports get rusty, having sober fun, daily recognition of our spirit and how it connects to the physical realm via our thoughts and words, and continuous awareness of how we are reacting to life (remembering that not everything that happens to us is personal). Basically, just getting back to what it was like to be a natural, living, human being.

Those are some heavy-duty tools, and they are powerful



enough to build some cool shit. But what often happened was we rarely practiced practicing with them.

What good is a bandsaw in a woodshop when you need to make a precision cut, but you've only turned the machine on once or twice? Overwhelmed by life, panicky and not clear-headed, you would probably cut off your finger. What good is a sewing machine if you don't know how to thread it? What good is a hammer if you don't know which end to hit with? Or, what good is attending support group meetings if we just show up, say hi, then leave?

The tools must be used as much as the old tool was used. With the support group meetings-tool, there are sponsorships to be had, and to give. There is service work to be done. And oh yeah, there are instructions to be completed thoroughly. If these three things are not done, you are simply walking into a wood shop and strutting past all the tools, then blaming the bandsaw for chopping off your finger.

There are more parables I could give related to other aspects of health, but it's obvious you can smell what I'm cooking here.

God damn it! What good does it do to fix a dent in your car door when the frickin engine doesn't even start? The outside looks great, as the car sits there unable to move forward! (Sorry, had one more in me.)

We don't get to just stop using our drug of choice and think everything will be fine, because the problem was never the drug. The drug was our maladapted solution to all the problems, a multi-tool, a solution that ceased working for our benefit, a comfort that became uncomfortable.

Even after we had not used the drugs for some time, the moment we felt discomfort from any physical, biochemical, or mental stress, we got that itch again. This is because Scaredy Cat

can't tell the difference between a huge pile of overdue bills and a real-life angry lion standing in our path.

It switches our entire body into survival mode (usually taking the form of a subtler fight-or-flight nervous response, sometimes called the sympathetic nervous response), and our body-mind (or psycho-somatic memory), remembers the quickest and easiest way we had used to escape the emotional threat.

We believed nothing else would relieve our discomfort with such effectiveness as our drug, not realizing there are many ways we can prevent and alter this discomfort without using artificial means with bad side-effects. This was because we never tried anything else, not really. Nothing would work because we believed nothing else would work, so it didn't. We made sure of it.

The shifting of this belief takes a little faith, a little trust, and this is hard to do. It's uncomfortable too.

You see, we must get a little used to feeling uncomfortable. This is quite ironic because waiting and searching for our next fix was a seriously uncomfortable practice that we participated in all the time, but we couldn't seem to pull it off as easily when sober.

Eventually, the discomfort of our itchy sweater (that we couldn't seem to pull off) and all its cravings and urges transformed. They morphed from being triggers, which turned our mouth into a vodka vacuum, into an alert system that signaled us to look at what is off-balance. Just the thought of using a drug became a dashboard check engine light for our mind/body vehicle, an indicator motivating us to seek adjustment in our daily habits and perceptions. A reminder to ask, "What's off?"

Life can seem all peaches and cream, then a craving will creep up on us because something made us feel off balance. Maybe it's

that we've been chasing those *dolla dolla* bills too hard and working exhaustive fifty-hour work weeks. Maybe our health regiment is a little too complete, leaving us overwhelmed and scrambling to fit everything into the day with zero down-time. Maybe we haven't learned to relax at all yet. Maybe we need to dial some things back. Maybe we need to ask for help for something. Maybe we need more sleep, more water, better food, a different career, a supportive relationship. . .

Now we see the source of our trouble from a different angle. The craving isn't so much of a threat or a problem, it's an indicator. An indicator of the problem. This was a huge discovery for us. We realized we had been dumping more and more gas into our tank when the car was bucking, but all we really needed was some windshield washer fluid so we could see that we were just bumping into shit.

These cravings, we can now call indicators, are telling us something. It's up to us to take care of our self by any means necessary and to pay attention to what we need. What WE need, not what the TV, smartphones, doctors, politicians, influencers, religious figures, teachers, billboards, magazines, commercials, and zombie cohorts (who've been over-influenced by all the above) tells us we need to feel better. We seek the most natural routes and strive to create the best conditions for a human to function. It's funny how we forgot what those were.

Here are some hints as to how far away from Natural we've gotten as a society. In general, we spend most of our day inside a box, self-caged by our office, home, cars, and shopping centers. Sunglasses and windows block our eyes and skin from the vital energy of the sunlight our body is designed to use. These days, it's not a simple task to get fresh air into our lungs if we live near a city, nor is it easy to find a space free of radiation from digital

devices and structures, which mess with our bioelectrical system. Our shoes insulate our feet from Mother Earth's electrons. We forgot how to effectively communicate with anything that isn't electronic. We have become conditioned to live in excess. We live out-of-balance, using more than we need, and far too busy maintaining that excess to have much energy left for compassionate acts. Our diet of information literally drowns our consciousness in a virtual matrix of uselessness. Don't get me started on how the food is produced. I even know of some people who dislike the taste of water, but that's understandable considering they most likely have never drunk from uncontaminated sources (tap and most bottled water is contaminated). What human being doesn't like water? That alone should speak volumes. Circadian rhythms, our rest/work cycles, which should coincide with the natural clock in the sky and yearly seasonal changes, were launched out the window with a catapult a long time ago. We no longer live in the habitat we were designed to inhabit. We are practically out of sync with just about everything we were designed for. We are like a fish living on land. It's no wonder why the body gets all gunked up and Scaredy Cat sounds the alarms.

Okay . . . I'll quit bitching before I throttle my fist through my computer screen. Oh, don't get me going on all the screens we stare into all day!

Remember how cravings work, on the survival part of our brain, through fear and reward, no matter how subtle or subconscious. If that primitive sucker gets stressed in even the smallest ways, the stressors will add up overtime and keep us anxious—in fear. If this goes on for too long, we reach a threshold and are more prone to the quickest way to relieve the discomfort: our drug of choice.

We must stay on our game. The gravity pulling us back to the drug abuse reflex is the old programming, our old reaction to our **environment** (internal and external). It is our default program because we had been doing it longer and more often than our newer, healthier coping-skills programming. The newer programs had not been practiced enough to become a reflex. We knew what needed to be done but knowing and doing are two different things.

Those old bio-neural pathways for using had been lamented and were still a little stronger in the beginning of recovery. That's why they seem to wait for when we are weak, distracted, and tired. Sometimes, it can be as sneaky as the thought of replacing our drug of choice with a less harmful one. But if, or should I say, when the less harmful drug stopped working as effectively as we wanted, we went back to our old favorite, the drug we knew would get the job done. We still had never addressed the problem of becoming strong enough to accept and push through discomfort.

This next illustration is based off an analogy from two prominent psychotherapists. It's not all mine, but I like it, so I'm gonna use it, and decorate it how I see fit. I doubt it's copywritten. If it is, sue me. About all they'll get is my cat. Damned fur ball wakes me up at 4 a. m. anyway.

Imagine yourself at the top of a huge, snowy hill holding a sled. The entire hill is covered with deep heavy snow. In front of you is a nicely packed rut where you have been sledding for years. The snowbanks along the sides of this path angle perfectly down to center to bring you back towards the nice smoothed-out path if you were to veer. It's the perfect slope.

If you want to get down this huge, snowy hill a different way, you will need to trudge through the deep snow and pack a new

path through repetition, much like the first path was made.

This is difficult because the sled doesn't slide nicely down the new path right away. You must kneel on the sled and grip the snow with your hands to drag yourself forward to pack it down. Other times, you may need to stop and get off the sled all together to clear a thick snow drift out of your way before moving on. This can get tiresome, and it's not a ton of fun.

While creating this new route, it's easy to look over at the old path that was already made. Even though you've started a few new paths through the snow, they are still not as smooth, or as quick as the old path. The new paths need to be slid down more times to pack them down nice.

It's the same with the way we change our response to anything in life when we are an adult and have been doing the same routines for so long. Difficult at first, but it can be done, and it gets easier the more times the new slopes are forged. This is how the curse is broken, the soothing lotion for your itchy arms.

Let's say we've been working diligently on our sobriety, but we feel lonely and tired of going back to an empty apartment with seemingly no reward in life after busy days and no one to snuggle with on cold winter nights.

We know we could simply pick up that eight-hundred-pound phone and call a sober friend we met at a meeting, but then we remember that ex-girlfriend. The on-and-off again one. The one who's always "ready to go" whenever we call, never mind how badly it always ended the last time.

She answers the call and it works. She drives right on over, and our thirsty loneliness is quenched by a night of resentful grudge sex (the best kind for a toxic mind). We re-taste that twisted sense of companionship once again.

But there was supposed to be two parts to the plan. She was supposed to give us what we wanted, then leave us alone. It was supposed to be a quick visit, a booty-call. She was only supposed to stay for a couple hours because a part of us knew our old persona once partied with this person all the time. Having this person in our presence for too long is dangerous for us, a definite threat to our sobriety. She's a slippery slope.

All we wanted was a little luv'n, but after the sex is done, she sits on our couch in her underwear across the coffee table from us. She reaches down between her knees and pulls up a bottle of our favorite booze from her purse. Aw, she remembered, how sweet. She takes a swig and shakes off the taste before sliding the bottle to our side of the table. The smell fires up our nervous system like Independence Day. Our gums water and heart pounds as we peer down at the elixir. When we raise our gaze back up to her, she's grinning and holding up a tiny plastic baggy full of a white powder that she flicks a couple times with her fingernail. Then she asks, "Are you ready for round two?"

Before she came over, we told her on the phone we were sober now. Why would she do that? It's not our fault she tempted us, right? It's her fault for bringing the poisons, right? We had no part in it. We didn't know this person was going to do that. We were sure we were only going to get what we wanted. We had no part in this situation we ended up in. (Sarcasm poured on thick.)

At the top of that sledding slope, there was a big red sign with flashing lights around the border, and it read LONLINESS. She was our old, nicely packed, pre-made, and very steep sledding path that had an inevitable brick wall with twelve-inch spikes waiting at the bottom of the hill for us. If we find our Self in the grips of an uncomfortable emotion, and have no alternative paths started, guess which route we are most likely to take?

## Tips, Tricks, and Hacks

An ingenious way to take our mind off the past and future bullshit is to make solid goals. Goals that make us happy, something to look forward to, focus on, increase our importance, or whatever. Something we can say, “This is what I’m working on. This is what I’m going to crush!” Something we can easily shift our focus towards when we are feeling down in the dumps. A good motivator. A productive and positive distractor. It’s one thing to have a good sobriety goal like, “I’m shooting for six months of sobriety this time,” which is great and all, but how fun is that? There’s not much to that goal, really. It’s almost limiting. Dream big. Make life worth living.

We sit down and think of exactly what we want to accomplish. We think of exactly what we want to bring into our life, how we want to be, the things we want to be doing, how we want to feel when we wake up in the morning, what a typical day looks like, etc. Really think about it hard.

Then take those thoughts out of the ethers of our mind and bring it into the physical world by writing it down and solidifying it on paper. Write it down, then rewrite it. When we rewrite it, we make it five times more concise than we think it needs to be. If the first draft was one page, rewrite it into five, detail packed, pages. We revisit it frequently, change it only if necessary, and execute daily tasks accordingly. And voila, we’ve just programmed our own mind.

Self-teach. It’s not hard to deprogram and reprogram our bio-computer. Learn different schools of thought from books and people. Watch videos that help build new understanding. Brainwash yourself with positive affirmations and teachings of



timeless wisdom to counterbalance all the social engineering and negative messages you have endured thus far. Engage the creative side of the brain as much as possible and discover new ways of expression and impression. Which means, get artsy fartsy. Doing this helps create new neurological pathways and makes taking on new habits much easier.

## CHAPTER 6

### For Forever-ever? Forever-ever-ever?

*I'm my own conspiracy theory*  
- Yours Truly

#### Time Period: Early Recovery

*I'm starting to feel like I got this under control. I'm getting buff, eating right, got a hobby, got some healthy relationships, and I can't remember the last time I had a craving I couldn't simply hurdle over.*

*The door to my past is closing and I've walked through a new one that leads to a brighter future. There's some money in the bank, finally. I've learned some new coping skills, found some solid ground to balance on, and adjusted my rituals during certain mood cycles. I've retained a good job, and I get to meetings when I can.*

*It feels like I've got a firm grip on my life. I feel normal, like a regular dude, no longer crawling through the squalors of hell. My self-esteem is so high right now, I might even be a little cocky, but I think I've got this disease in check.*

*I know they say once you're an Addict you can never use again, but maybe I just needed to get my shit together. Maybe I*

*just needed some good things to happen to get me going. My mind is clear, I feel great, and my whole environment is better now.*

*Things are totally different, and I think I can maybe handle a drink or two, but only occasionally. If it starts to get bad again, I'll feel it coming and just stop. I know how to stop. I've done it before. That's the plan. My control is strong. I've gone this long without using, how could my control not be strong?*

*With the amount of work I've put in, I deserve a little reward. Never drinking again is a ridiculous concept anyway. It's been so long. I must be recovered by now. Why continue with all the recovery stuff when I feel healthy and normal? Isn't that the definition of recovered, to be back to feeling normal?*

## Time Period: Present Day, and Sober

No, we don't need to stay sober forever. That is an enormous demand, one which even a Normy would consider outlandish. But that's a good question, why stay sober after we've shifted the direction of our life to such a bright future—while we were sober? After achieving almost everything we want, the only thing missing now is the ability to drink like a normal fellow, right?

So maybe try staying sober today. That's all we gotta do—just today. That's an attainable goal. Just get through the day and see if the idea is still there tomorrow; and if so, maybe ask why. That day to day effort goes a long way. It's way easier than being sober for the rest of our life. You already have a lot of 24-hour sobrieties (I have tons, winning), what's one more?

Once again, when pondering what seems like a lifelong prison sentence of sobriety, we must ask the question, which pool of time is our mind swimming laps in? This simple self-check brings our thoughts back to the present moment, where all the love and truth live, where we can swim in that love for our Self, including the parts we aren't necessarily super stoked about.

What we thought was our misfortune was that we are built differently than the people we sometimes admire who can drink. We have a different trait coded in our DNA. This is something all the counselors and sobriety programs try to motivate an addict to do first thing, admit we are an Alcoholic, and that we're powerless over alcohol. But why?

The problem is you're thinking about it all wrong. You think that admitting you're an alcoholic is the same as admitting a weakness, but one of the biggest weaknesses a social creature can display is when they cannot fully accept themselves.

You can see it when drunkards sometimes get weird, or uncomfortable, when a confident sober person is in the room. The drunkard's weakness is exposed by the simple presence of a person who's comfortable in their own skin.

What we found when we admitted, *to* our Self, we are Alcoholic was that we were accepting a certain part *of* our Self. We accepted a small little piece of Me that we thought we hated. We didn't want to accept it for long time, but it was Me all the same.

Not accepting a part of our Self does not make it untrue. When we weren't accepting this particular trait of ours, we were rejecting Me, how I truly am. There was a part of us that wasn't loving another part of our Self, unaccepting of a certain piece of the whole.

This unacceptance of Self, this dissatisfaction with Self, this "need" people have to alter themselves into anything other than what they are, can look something like when a person doesn't like their straight brown hair. They can dye it to change its color, curl it with an iron to make it wavy, put extensions in it, place a wig over it, style it, shave it all off, or whatever—but it will always grow back straight and brunette.

Meanwhile, someone else wants to make their blonde and curly hair straight and brunette. You've got bald men getting hair implants, men with full heads of hair choosing the bald look. Light skinned people try to get darker, dark skinned people try to get lighter. Thin people wanting to get thicker, big people wanting to get thinner. Short people wearing shoes that lift, and tall people . . . well, they just need to join a basketball or volleyball team and make it work for them. Large chested women may want a reduction, and small chested women may want an enlargement. Some people continually make babies because they

didn't get the sex they wanted on the first 3 tries (double entendre). Many poor people wish to be rich, and believe it or not, many rich people wish for a simpler life. My point is that it's difficult for most individuals to fully accept themselves and what their conditions are.

No matter how much we didn't want to be different in the respect of alcohol, we are. And when we admitted we were and accepted (what some call) alcoholism as an inherent trait, it became ours, we owned it. Once we owned it, once *you* recognized it as part of *me*, and chose to love us anyway, we could then start learning how to get through life with it. Like if you suddenly found out you were about to take on the responsibility of raising a child, you need to learn new ways of doing some things to get through the day. But this does not mean a great life can't still be enjoyed.

The problem wasn't drinking, the problem was we wouldn't accept that we could no longer do it and be happy. Some wise dude said, "suffering only comes when we refuse to accept how things are." Not only does our suffering reduce in parallel with this acceptance, our limits become clear as well. Which leads to the second admittance, admitting we were powerless over alcohol. Note the word "were".

This was different than admitting a trait. When we admitted we were powerless over the substance that triggers the trait—that every time we stepped in the ring with this substance and tried to control it, we would always get our ass kicked—it turned from an idiotic lesson that we continually repeated into wisdom. For as long as we were unable to admit that our inherit trait was stronger than our wish, we would keep getting in the fighting ring round after round, trying to find a way to overcome it.

Since we don't live in a video game with an endless amount

of lives to spare, after admitting we couldn't overpower our opponent, we found the best way to win. The best way to stop the abuse and bruises and consequences, the best way to avoid the beatings was simply to not get in the ring at all.

With this acceptance of the lesson, we earned a choice. No matter how many people, situations, and stressors pushed us towards that fighting ring, the one thing we refused to do was get back inside and fight that 800 lb. gorilla again.

Once this wise decision was made, there was only one place to turn. We turned away from the ring and faced the things that were pushing us toward it. Those opponents we can win against, they are much easier to control than an inherent trait enmeshed within our bio-electric matrix that causes us to lose every time we fight for control over that which we have no control over.

After a little practice doing this, we found out something cool. Not only were these battles against these people, places, and things (which we thought were pushing us toward the ring) much easier to win, we could change them too. We could change the people, the factors, and the situations in our favor—to the point where they were no longer pushing us towards the ring but pulling and leading us far away, to a place where we couldn't even see the ring anymore.

In electrical engineering, the term admittance is a measure of how easily a circuit or device will allow a current to flow. If truth is the energy current, one's admittance of the truth determines how well they will function, like a bouncer allowing the truth to enter our mental party club so it can dance. This is called honesty, and it's a whole different energy wave than most are used to.

It's the first step of the healing process. Without permitting the truth to become us—as long as we continue to not accept our Self—we can throw all the money, doctors, pharmaceuticals,

support meetings, prayers, exercise, positive thoughts, or anger at the problem and it won't change a damn thing.

The truth is what sets us free. Honesty is what heals us of the desire for what kills us. Sometimes it's hard to swallow, but once we permit the truth to be what it is, what we are, then everything surrounding this truth begins to change, and it changes in the ways it's supposed to, not in the ways that we thought we wanted it to.

It's okay to miss things we once loved, but we must remain flexible and curious. Curious about our mental states and their conceptions. Why does being sober forever bother us at any point in time? It didn't bother us when we were playing peek-a-boo with a newborn baby. It didn't bother us when we were hiking on a trail along the river. It didn't bother us when we woke up energized from a good night's sleep. Check the indicator on the car dashboard. Get under the hood. What's off balance now? Is there a part of our life, or our thinking, that needs to be adjusted?

As we practice this curiosity, something amazing happens. We get answers. We realize, more and more, that old concepts we once held to be true become unfounded and flawed. As we untwist them, we begin to gain wisdom. This wisdom spawns the revelation that we really don't know much about anything, because everything we thought we knew changes as we mature.

This shift in thinking inadvertently brings forth the mind of a child. Yes, I just said mature perception resembles a child-like acceptance that we don't know everything and take what is given. Humble in the fact that we really know very little, that there is still very much to learn, we become again curious about the world and the people in it. The adventure in our life is renewed and we begin to discover novelties around every corner: new



knowledge about how everything works, new places of peace, and new dreams. This is the reward of living. The answer to your question is no, we do not need to be sober for the rest of our life, but we do need to be sober to live it today.

## Tips, Tricks, and Hacks

We might think of our Self as clever and decide to just smoke some weed instead of drinking, or drink instead of tweak, or eat chocolate instead of inhale cigarettes, or whatever instead of whatever. This should indicate to us that we are still under the spell. There are other ways to solve the problem. This solution of substitution with another drug scores us a big fat zero on the creativity meter.

Here's what happens. Nothing really changed. Eventually, we find that the new drug we're using—for the exact same reason we used our original drug of choice—just doesn't cut it anymore. It just doesn't get the job done like our favorite drug did. And if the substitute drug, just so happen to, get the job done, then we just get hooked on that one and abuse *it* instead.

The substitute drug seems to work for a while. I mean come on, it's better than nothing, right? Then pressures pile up and we inevitably give in to releasing the safety valve with the tool we think works better. Nothing changed. It may serve as a temporary crutch until you can work some stuff out, or we might tell our Self it's not as bad as the last habit—until it does get as bad as the last habit or leads us right back to our initial addiction. It happens every time.

The healthiest distraction is to find something we can healthily obsess over, like a hobby. You know you have a good one when there's never enough time, one where the hours fly by. Something we can easily switch our focus to when we notice Humpty Dumpty putting in over-time.

Relapse does happen. It doesn't need to, and it doesn't happen to

everyone, but it's often an integral part of the learning curve. We make mistakes, we fall into traps and learn to climb out, that's how humans improve. We don't beat our Self up over it, and we can only *get* over it by learning from it. Yoda said it best, "Yesh, failure is our greatest teacher ... hmmmmm."

## CHAPTER 7

### What's in It for Me?

*But I want it now!*

*-Varuca Salt (Willie  
Wonka)*

#### Time Period: Early Recovery

*Okay, I relapsed. Fuck! It was only for the weekend. Then two weeks later it happened again, and that binge lasted for about five days. I'll admit, it was fun the first day. The chemical comfort I craved came ... then left. I almost felt like I accomplished a feat that no other problem-drinker had before me . . . but soon after, not so much.*

*Fortunately, I was able to quit rather quickly and learn a good lesson. I remember all the other times and ways I had tried controlling it. It never worked out then, and it sure didn't this time either. Ultimately, it was not the reward I needed in exchange for dealing with my daily duties.*

*There's no doubt in my mind now that I can't drink like the others. There's so much work though. There're so many*

*responsibilities that come with “adulting”. Pressure builds, and nothing comes close to releasing the valve like alcohol did. Sometimes I miss the good old days, when my only worry was when or how I was going to get my next feel-good fix. At least everything seemed much simpler back then.*

*How do people do it? It looks like everyone gets to unwind on the weekends. They all seem happy. They work during the week and get their drink-on over the weekend, appearing all relaxed and care-free. That’s all I want for my efforts, a reprieve from the daily madness, to decompress from reality and have fun.*

*I mean, I do some fun things . . . I guess. There are some buddies I hang out with from my support group, and we do enjoy our time laughing. Family events are nice too. I chat with the relatives I never really got to know when I was hammered, and I’ve regained enough physical stamina and balance to play volleyball with my cousins and not tweak my lower back on the landing after spiking the ball.*

*But it’s just not the same. It’s not the same kind of uninhibited action where I felt like I could do anything I wanted: stay up late, loud music, endless flirting, and crazy party stories to brag about later.*

*I’ll admit there are some bits of joy in my life, but I only get excited for things like the weekends because I know I don’t need to go to work, not because I have anything exciting going on.*

*When a coworker asks, “so whatcha doin this weekend?”*

*I’m all, “I dunno, I might go to my girlfriend’s sister’s cousin’s wedding (where I don’t know anyone and can’t drink). If we don’t go to that, probably just get a movie, clean the house, maybe fix the car if I don’t need to mow the lawn.”*

*Yuck!*

*The weeks seem to drone on without a good payout. I’m not*

*climbing any corporate ladders. I'm not buying any new cars. Vacations are out of the question until I can finish paying of some loans. It really feels like I am wasting my life away. Just existing, but without the excitement, or anything to look forward to that I'm interested in.*

*Is this how regular people feel? That it's just a hamster wheel and we settle for the little pleasures to be our motivation to do more? It seems like a scam. Work, work, work, do the right things, be a good boy, here's a peanut, good job, now get back to work.*

## Time Period: Present Day, and Sober

Staying healthily happy does take some discipline. What's discipline? "Discipline is choosing between what you want now, and what you want most."—Abe Lincoln. Discipline is a choice, a choice we make when we remember our goals. It's not easy all the time, and it's not fun every day, but the components of staying healthy are the same whether someone is an addict or not, so it can feel like work for anyone.

Work is an action we do for a payout. Nobody yearns to go back to their job on Monday, but they don't seem to mind it as much on payday. It means doing something whether we feel like it or not, but often feeling better after we did it. Many people choose not to work, or don't choose something to work for. You were once like this.

A difficult challenge in early recovery was when we continued to obsess over the existence of some cure, like some die-hard fan of sasquatch. And yes, we worked for it. We still wanted to figure out some way to taste a little bit of our favorite treat without becoming sick, and we somehow still convinced our self that our drug of choice was the only reward that would satisfy.

The demonic con job still thrived in the background of our mind with lies about the existence of a certain level of control where the side-effects of our disorder were bearable enough to indulge in our own destruction. In early recovery our goal was to find a cure that allowed us to be reasonably sick.

Messed up, I know.

Once the bubble of this obsession broke, we found that searching for a cure with the intention of being able to drink again is not what we were looking for at all, and often a disastrous

dead end. We were faced with the problem of finding a new reward. The best reward in your world seemed to have disappeared along with the notion of there being any cures for our uniqueness.

At this point, you had some experience being sober for larger chunks of time, and could begin to compare the colors of the grass on both sides of the fence, some pros and cons. The realization that the rewards of your drug aren't as rewarding as you had once thought, or as rewarding as they once were when we were younger became less of a struggle.

We remember the good and the bad without any delusional veil. This is a sign of maturation. The memories become even more disillusioned as we contemplate what we should have, or could have been doing instead, but this does not negate the fact it was a fun lifestyle.

During these periods of abstinence, we can find a more natural peace, but to find something such as this we must search for it in different places than we had looked before. Hopefully, we have created some time and space in our life for this find. This, in itself, is a reward you have not thought of yet.

Your emotional life had been such a rollercoaster, and so chaotic for so long (both internally and externally) that **peace** may feel foreign. It's uncomfortable despite it being the same mission you had when tasting that first hit of the day.

We were ultimately chasing a sense of serenity, trying to find anything to effectively dull the anxiety and transform our hell into a temporary paradise, always reaching for something to push the silent button on the screams of our existence. When we finally do achieve chunks of serenity—the natural way—it can seem surreal, almost fake, still too much like a stranger we can't really trust just yet. Ironic, huh?



Thankfully, there are better rewards than using poisons to force artificial highs and calmness. We simply need to look for them, notice them, or sometime work towards creating them. These natural rewards are overlooked while we are distracted. They are taken for granted because they are everywhere. They hide in plain sight, and they're experienced in a different way, and that way is called Joy.

While peace and serenity are not always thought of as fun, they are a prerequisite for joy, and joy is a prerequisite for fun.

Let me explain.

We had grown accustomed to having **fun** at the flip of a switch. No matter how rough the day or week went, we knew we could rely on the one thing that could distract our vexing gremlins with simple and available consumption. Our nervous system had a quick and reliable stimulus for fun thrills. Even sitting on the couch and watching television was an easy endorphin rush with a few more hits.

There's a difference between Joy and Fun. We experience joy, we have fun. Fun is something to be had, while joy is state of *being* that's not contingent on our surroundings and situation. A person needs to go somewhere or be doing something to have fun. Joy can be experienced anywhere, at any time, while doing anything, because it is a state of mind which does not depend on life going the right or wrong way and does not depend on us doing an activity we label as fun.

Joy is a mood we inhabit, and fun is a feeling that can only be derived from a joyful state. It's why we pre-partied before going anywhere to have fun. We drank before the event because we needed to force the needle on our mood-meter, so we weren't a drag when it was time to have fun.

When we accept and integrate joy into our world, one where

happiness doesn't depend on what we possess, or what we are doing on the weekends, or seen doing on social media, the fun will arise in more moments of our day, naturally, because it will be a biproduct of a joyful disposition. The need to wait until the end of the day or the week to have fun no longer exists, nor does the need to purchase a supply of Happy.

Instead of waiting for the weekend to have fun, we intentionally tackle everything we do with a little more joy. Work becomes fun. Just being with people becomes fun. Something as simple as hanging out with a friend turns into a giggle-fest of childish jokes. (Nobody just hangs out anymore . . . sad).

Boredom turns into rest—so we have energy to make things fun by maintaining a joyful presence. Listening to audiobooks while folding laundry becomes a pleasant activity. Cranking some music and dancing in the kitchen while doing the dishes becomes not so much of a *chore*. Nobody has fun while doing chores unless they are in a joyful state. Without joy in our heart, almost everything becomes a “chore” and disliked and grumbled over as we fight to conquer our checklists of misery. That's just no way to live.

In a joyful state, we wake up in the morning excited for the day, instead of dreading another assembly line of tasks. The only difference between dreadful tasks and joyful tasks is whether the tasks are ours. In joy, we remember that this is our life.

We laugh, for what seems to others, over no good reason; but for us, there doesn't need to be one. We woke up alive, and that's enough. The reasons to laugh and smile sprout from how we feel, joyous, which is simply the choice we made after realizing that the video game controller of our thoughts was always in our hands and it's just easier to navigate the levels when we can see the screen clearly.

We become the center of attention again at events and parties, but in a different way; we exuberate joy, and people are attracted to it. This state of joy was what we were endlessly struggling to artificially simulate when we abused our drug more and more in vain attempts to keep longer periods of comfort and happiness. But when we are using, this strategy is futile if our drug is taken away, or when it stops working in our favor—when our lover has turned on us and forces us to face much more threatening states of emotion without any place to run.

The duration of the effectiveness of our artificial manipulations became increasingly more temporary, calling for larger and larger amounts to get the equivalent effect. The drug's side-effects became worse with greater consumption, eventually causing us to avoid sobriety at all costs. What was once comfortable became uncomfortable, and that's when the party's over. After this happens our emotional multi-tool was no longer fun, but we had been participating in the charade for so long that we forgot how to have fun without it. More importantly, we forgot how to be joyful.

This is easily illustrated by the fact that, without our drug, our body/mind would engage its survival mode, setting off Scaredy Cat. The survival brain would sound the alarm, causing the emotional brain to overcome any reasoning by the logical portion, like being in love with a toxic person.

It's challenging to be joyful when a big part of us is in Fear, or survival mode. Happy juices don't flow very easily in survival mode, until the threat is gone. This takes some time, faith, and persistence to rebalance.

What we found in early recovery was that we were unable to enjoy our self when we seemingly should be. When we found our Self surrounded by happy people laughing, good food on the

table, nice music playing in the background on a hot summer day with a popsicle in our hand—for reasons that eluded us at the time—we could not enjoy it. This is another reason why so many believe sobriety sucks so badly in the beginning. But now you know, it's all in how we look at it.

Moving on.

Where we took the biggest hit was when we avoided processing the darker sides of our emotional spectrum. When we dull the edge of our negative emotions, we also dull our ability to experience positive emotions.

Our emotions span a spectrum with opposite ends. On one end is fear and pain, and on the other is joy and happiness. The habit of suppressing painful states also shrinks our ability to experience pleasant states naturally. If you cut one end of the spectrum short, the other end shortens as well. It goes both ways.

Happiness cannot be accepted without accepting it's opposite. It's the only way either can exist. It's the whole Yin-Yang thing. Without darkness, there is no light to compare; without up, there is no measurement of down; without cold, there cannot be hot. Yes, I am saying we must fully experience and admit the pain in order to fully experience the joy. Avoidance of pain ultimately results in avoidance of joy. Just don't get the two confused.

Many can relate to this pain/joy notion in the sense that one can have a beautiful home and family, a great career, functioning vehicles, and all the gifts a material culture has to offer—the outline that society had told them would make them happy—but for some ungraspable reason they are incapable of appreciating any of it a lot of the time. This person may have been led to believe that the picture-perfect life would bring happiness and exterminate pain, but then the abundance of blessings become

burdens. This is only one way undealt with pain and inauthenticity, whether it's from the past or the present, will seep into someone's reality. (I know that one's a thinker).

There are so many reasons for joy on this realm we call Earth. Once joy is welded in our heart, almost everything we do becomes more fun. Well, not everything. Hardship must still be endured here and there, or we would be unable to appreciate the joy. But we will experience more periods of happiness in direct proportion to our joyful nature, and this happiness will not rely on how many ounces of a poison is affecting our nervous system.

You might say, "That sounds all nice and wishy washy. It's a beautiful promise, and something to look forward to, but how? How does it work? How do I get to that point?"

Simple, you do the work you didn't want to do (don't skip leg day at the gym, allegorically speaking.) By addressing the past in a healthy way, you've started the process of learning how to deal with life on life's terms, not yours. Life doesn't give a shit about your terms!

When you learn how to manage and accept the parts of you that are the past, you can now handle the messes that happen currently with more wisdom. It weakens the dramatic effect that current situations have on you.

Here's what will happen. You sat down with someone, a mentor of sorts, and faced the ugliness of the past and learned to change how you look at it—just by looking at it (four eyes are better than two). You twisted the experience into a positive lesson and allowed it to make you stronger because you understand that you survived.

Now, when something undesirable happens to you—like a breakup in a relationship—it doesn't affect you the same way it

once did. You won't react like a 13-year-old girl and think the entire world is coming to an end. You get over it much quicker and move on. Move on to experience more happiness because you are not stuck on what just happens. Life goes on.

Mysteriously, our goal in life should never be Happiness. Happiness is a byproduct of satisfaction from the life we're creating, and like a joyful mood, it's also a temporary state of being because it depends on its opposite to exist.

A healthy lifestyle is our goal, and happiness is what we want from achieving that goal. We were unsatisfied with our health at the end of our drinking career because it was causing us to become more unhappy more often. Where we could once stay on the high end of the teeter totter with our bottle in hand, we eventually slid to the low end when the drink took our ability to push off the ground with our legs. The all-encompassing goal of health increases our odds for more frequent bouts of happiness because of the emotional fluctuation, taking the downs with the ups and using our own legs to bounce.

We stay sober for the same reason we stayed drunk. Our emotions will still ebb and flow, like when we manipulated our moods with a drug, except the highs and lows of the healthy lifestyle are less intense and far less dangerous because we are not dropping the teeter totter so hard we break our back with no legs to catch the fall.

Let's not fool our self, the world with throw mud at us, sober or not. While there is much good in the world, the best of humanity is usually spawned from suffering. Even a picture-perfect life will create a perfect pain because there is no contrast for the person who has no problems to solve. Then problems are created, conjured, summoned, manifested, but can also be vaporized just as easily.

Whether we gain happy moments by helping others with their struggle, or by getting through our own, happiness is the alchemy of turning lead into gold, or shit into the manure that nourishes flowers and crops, but we still need the *shit* before we can transform it into something useful.

We get brief episodes of authentic happiness, but happiness must not stay the objective because it is a temporary state whose requirements constantly change. What made us happy today may not make us happy tomorrow. If the requirements do not change, we become addicted to whatever we believe is making us happy (which is fine if it's something like enjoying time with our kids or spouse, but it could become annoying for them), eventually requiring an imbalanced amount of it to maintain the emotion.

This pursuit of the ungraspable can be better described as “enjoy the ride”. Life is an adventure with ups and downs and what-the-fucks, like any good novel or movie. There's the main character who has something that he needs to do or wants. Then the whole story is about how to not let him get it (obstacles), while he figures out how to get it, and with all these crazy experiences happening along the way which shapes and molds the character into a whole different person by the end of the book.

And of course, the character's life doesn't end there. Even if he got what he wanted and it made him happy, you gotta have a sequel with new problems to solve, new enemies to fight, and new understandings built off the previous book's developments. This holds true in our own life. We can design our life to capture more frequent and longer bouts of happiness, but this state remains temporary, like all other emotions, even the bad ones if we can learn to move forward.

Unfortunately, the state of forever happy does not exist. We

couldn't buy it with all the money in the world. Of course, this does not stop people from trying. One can drive themselves insane chasing a fleeting goal, such as consistent life-long happiness, as if it were a \$100 bill attached to a string held by a couple of punk kids hiding around the corner. It seems the moment we get to touch it, it gets tugged away and we are left standing there frustrated and looking down at our empty hands (probably forgetting that we already have \$200 in our pocket).

If we think back to our addiction, this was what we were doing. "I want to be happy, and I want to be happy now!" Chug, chug, chug. "I don't want to put forth the efforts to make any of the changes in my life that I know need to be made, but I know how to feel better for the next few hours!" Chug, chug, chug.

Our emotions are impermanent. Think about the last thing you wanted very badly. Whatever it was: a new car, better job, a taco, an outfit, a degree, a house, a sexual conquest, or even winning \$10,000. How long did that keep you happy? How long did the exhilaration stick around? Be honest. How long until everything was back to the same ol' same ol'?

What we do about this harsh truth is observe our life through a more objective lens, and we don't take every little thing so damn personally like there's some sort of cosmic fairness scale we're on the low end of.

You're winning more than you think, be grateful.

It's about trenching through the mud until we find the score, relishing in it while we have it, and on to the next one. This new lens (Primo), this new perspective, keeps us from the delusion of failing when we really are not, thus enhancing our happiness. Ha, the way to get more happiness is to solve problems we find sufferable. In other words, we get to a level where we understand that we choose most of the problems we need to solve, and this



makes us happier. The universe has a sick sense of humor.

Think about those weirdos who like to climb to the summits of mountains. Deadly terrain, colder than a lawyer's heart, high-speed face-scraping winds, no Wi-Fi, the most extreme and uncomfortable place one could ever dream to be, let alone exert themselves in. It's not like they leave the mansion and just skip up the 29,000 ft high rock singing uplifting tunes and sleeping comfortably after dining on steak and salad. No, of course not, the conditions suck. So why do they do it?

Probably because they learned that rewards feel better when a goal is set so high that they must grow as a person to achieve it; because only then, you achieve more than the goal itself.

Maybe this was why our soul chose to endure this tragic curse of addiction when we first manifested into human form—for what it feels like after we have overcome our own mountain.

## Tricks, Tips, and Hacks

There is a phenomenon inside all humans. It's the need for a struggle to be happy. We need to overcome something. Sometimes when everything is going well, we create a struggle out of nothing. Some people call it drama.

We can sometimes observe this in people of affluence. Sure, the rich have different struggles than the poor, but do we really need to bitch and moan about our opportunities to become tens of thousands of dollars in debt so we can surround ourselves with meaningless trinkets, paper awards, and flashy technology? We often become so fearful of losing these “things”, accolades, and prestige.

Oh, I'm sorry, let me clarify.

I'm not talking about rich Americans verses poor Americans. I'm talking about Americans of any socio-economic status—from the McMansions to the poorest neighborhoods—verses 90% of this planet's population. Many people around the world would think that even our homeless live lavishly.

Yeah, quality of life statistics: how many electronic devices owned, medical resources, working vehicles per household, living space, sanitation, education, running hot water, clothes, home appliances, and so forth—show that even the North American poverty-stricken have a better quality of life rating than most middle-class Europeans, not to mention third-world and rural. This begs the question, what's the real struggle?

I encourage you to travel. Go to some other country. Do not stay in some resort or fancy hotel in the tourist sector. Go to where the natives are. Hang out with them, soak their culture, listen to their language, their viewpoints and opinions. Eat their

food. Follow their rules of conduct. Learn their lifestyle and values. This trip will prove to be much more valuable to you as a human being than simply leaving your city and visiting a place which is basically just like your city, but with better weather.

We have experienced enough thrills for five people during our party career. Exciting things can still be done, but you must stop trying to do the same old things. They will only bring back the same nasty results. Besides, you've already partied in all the different types of places you can party in, tried all the sex positions with all the different flavors of women, tried all the drinks, and been to all the scenes. Let's try to chill out and just enjoy feeling good naturally. Maybe a goal is in-order here. Have you ever tried something like bungee jumping, or feeding a baboon some bananas on the side of the road in Uganda?

If someone doesn't appreciate what they already have, why would the universe grant them more? And even if such a person received more, would it make them happy, or would they just need more and more? Let's be real, the feeling of appreciation is often better than what we are appreciating.

## CHAPTER 8

### Unperson

*Death by a thousand papercuts.*

*- Lingchi*

#### Time Period: Early Recovery

*Even before my drinking career ever began, I've always felt like I was different than everyone else. Not necessarily like a nerd or a freak, more like a mismatched thread in the social fabric—maybe the torn one that gets snagged and pulled—always thinking and emoting differently than my peers, unable to conform to the cultural norms as seamlessly as most could.*

*When I attempted to fit in, it felt uncomfortable, inauthentic. That's a lonely place to be. I still feel that way now sometimes, that people don't, and never will, understand me. How could they when I barely understand myself? This makes me question my worth and inner compass.*

*Once upon a time, I attempted to assume responsibility for my insanity, but I can no longer blame myself for the entirety of my disfunction. It almost seems like a perfectly normal reaction*

*to an inverted world where compliance is sculpted from manufactured chaos, brains are bent by indoctrinations, enslavement is cloaked with success, and lies are disguised as information. One where freedom is outlined by infinite statutes, hate and indignation are a la carte, entire populations view the landscape through digital blindfolds, and criminals dispense justice; where our instincts are systematically suppressed and exploited, truth is derived from popularity, health is assassinated by its own industry, and open minds are riveted shut by mandate.*

*Anyway, I value my time more than money, experiences over things, and service over praise. I need to be outdoors more than most. I get claustrophobic when locked inside unbarred workplace cells while my dreams flee from the fluorescent lighting. I need people around me who are unafraid to swim beneath the iceberg tips of presentation. I need to be shown that emotions are allowed. I need downtime to recharge from the sucking wires of expectation—to Fast from the world regularly, and not be viewed as lazy for it.*

*What the hell is wrong with me? It's as if I'm an inside-out version of what society tells me how I am supposed to be.*

*The pressures to conform to these norms are enormous. It's as if I'm trying to escape some worldly Heavy Metal concert mosh pit while friends and family push me towards obtaining the American Dream at all costs.*

*Am I weak for not wanting it—for not wanting what everyone else wants? Am I forever an outcast for not wanting self-induced bondage to the things that decorate my stray from a natural state? Is it an abomination to want a counter-spell for the proposed linear track of false securities?*

*Can other people see the same things I do: the same trends, the same traps, the same ever-repeating cycles of history, the same*

*brainwashing, the same contagion of our diseased obsession for receiving the proverbial whip-to-the-back concealed as gold in our hands?. Does it make anyone else nauseous to watch the branded brains drone about in their Pavlovian routines? Or, is that just their truth, and I'm the delusional one?*

*Is it acceptable to not have an identity defined by measurements, to not fit into a specific package at all, to be unique, part of a nonexistent clique? I have never been told this was okay. For all these attacks on my individuality, I was willing to reach for anything to quiet the calamities of my mind—only to go insane anyway.*

## Time Period: Present Day, and Sober

It can get frustrating when we see social constructs for what they truly are, but we must refrain from our cleverness. Not everyone thinks the same way we do, and why should they? How boring would it be if everyone had the same opinions, tolerances, journeys, defects, and intelligences?

The truth is, nobody's perfect, including you, me, us, the people around us, and especially humanity's social tendencies. It's one of the reasons why our species is so advanced: because we make the most mistakes.

Ultimately, we need our tree of health watered by these teachers of chaos. If we install dams and choose not to drink from these fountains of flaws, we end up isolated and we wither into our own traps, our own distractions, and are swept away from the main goal.

Why does what *they* do bother you anyway? Why are you focused on them and not us? If we are honest, we can notice these observations are nothing more than a mirror of our own insecurities. We notice them because they are not outside, but within. They paint a mural of our fears, our deficiencies, our indulgences, and our biases. But, when we are in a healthy state, the mural changes . . . it gets prettier.

When we can see with honest eyes— simultaneously looking inward and out— we quickly become humbled by the fact we are not clever at all. When we listen and accept other people's words without the intention of replying, debating, manipulating, or changing their perspective, we can then relate, connect, love, learn, and we no longer need to waste our willpower on trying to correct the paths of others with unsolicited directions. This goes

the same for individual people, and complex systems of control.

We remember we are lost as well, wandering the boundaries of our current realm to draw a new map. The wisdom comes from refraining to tell others to go left when we are both lost in different mazes; mazes designed by an intelligence we cannot begin to fathom because our mazes change whenever we shift our expectations. Where we once strived to exit the maze, we now request that the designer customize it.

Our frustrations about how other people do their *thing*—whether we deem it to be incorrect, or whether their actions affect our life or not—are simply distractions. Their life is not our hobby, ours is.

This is called self-evasion. If our attentional, and energetic hands release our own wheel of wellness, our steering becomes misaligned and we veer off the street. The vehicle wants to pull toward the ditch if we're leaning out of our car door window attempting to put one of our hands on another person's wheel (which is exactly what I am trying to do now, but I assure you it's cathartic). If we become overly consumed by other people's business, our vehicle can easily sway off and crash into a light pole. A light pole representing a bottle in our mouth because we could no longer tolerate people's shit.

As we continue to bond with our peers, we find many who feel the same way we do about the state of *things* going on in the world. These people are everywhere, and as we meet and connect with more and more like-minded folks with similar struggles, we realize we are not an outcast by any means.

Unfortunately, many people have had some of their senses dulled (as we had once done purposefully to our Self), causing them to become more tolerant of all the madness. Yet others



agree with us regarding what is happening in the world but are currently locked inside the theatre with a firm belief there is no way out, and that the play they're participating in is the only one. And for some others, the systems we despise work just fine for them and they wouldn't have it any other way.

One of the things we liked about information exchanges in drunken conversation was the openness and clarity of other people's defects and circumstances, a two-way street of respect for life issues. It's the same on a sober level as well; that is, if we can conjure the courage to have a sober conversation long enough to scrape off both our masks.

We found we are all expressions of the same spirit. Give two people the same genetics and developmental environment and you would have the exact same person twice. When we take away these two factors, we find we are all made of the same stuff, made of the same energy, and dealing with the same hell the best way we know how at the time.

This holds true for the large corporate controls and industries run by the villains who we love to hate and bitch and moan about. Once we stop evading the parts of our Self that we're not the most proud of, we can become honest, and acknowledge that we don't know for certain if we wouldn't make the same decisions as another person if we were put in their position. We sure didn't have a problem buying into most of their lies and products with our self-hypnotized impotence when it was convenient for us, ultimately supporting them in their villainous ways.

To help put this into a better perspective, not everyone thinks the same way we do, and they don't need to. If we continue to grow, by keeping our focus on our own shit, hopefully one year from now we won't think the same way we do now either.

## Tips, Tricks, and Hacks

Who has ever taken your advice? That's right, nobody! Barely even yourself. Yeah, they might listen, and maybe even look up from their phone and nod to validate your ramblings here and there, maybe even display total agreement and say something like, "I'll do that ... tomorrow." But, no matter how good your info is, they will do or think whatever they want anyway (once you leave the room). We do this as well.

The most we can hope for is to plant some sort of psychological seed and wait until it someday grows into their own thought. Although, doing this can be a real energy drain and disappointment when we don't see any fruits grow from our cleverness (not to mention it's often a conversational killjoy that can trigger cognitive dissonance in the other person if it's unsolicited advice. And even if it's solicited, good luck).

We try to listen more than talk. Do you know how much information you can get out of someone with your silence (us included)? Even if we deem everything they say as wrong, it's quite entertaining to watch them ramble on and on, then walk into their own answers to their quandary. We don't need to push our opinion into every conversation.

Do we let the other person speak until they are finished, or do we interrupt because we think we know their next sentence? Are we always offering a solution? Why? Are we distantly conjuring our replies as they speak? Are we trying to listen to their verbal message or their emotional message?

It's easier to practice this art of listening with other people before we do it with our Self, because conversations are not always about words. (I'm sure that last bit was a seed, not my own thought. But it sounds cool.)

As we continue improving our Self, and learn to write our own story, we gain the capacity to read between the lines. As our character navigates this (author)itized world, we notice there are layers within the plot, and it is us who twists the course of the action and changes the parameters of the book by altering our own character within it by how we react to situations. (Too much weird? Yeah, that was too much.)

## CHAPTER 9

### Now What?

*Recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.*  
- AA Big Book, 1<sup>st</sup> page,  
1<sup>st</sup> paragraph

#### Time Period: Early Recovery

*I have been in a kick-ass groove for quite some time now. It's almost safe to say I have achieved some long-term sobriety—almost. My routines are healthier than they once were. There are more bouts where I feel happy, joyous, and free. Many of the grand promises my sobriety program offered have been coming true. So, when is the crap-storm going to come? Will I be able to handle it?*

*My first attempts at staying sober were often roundhouse-kicked in the face when things in my life started going my way. When I thought I had everything in check, when I believed it was **me** making it all happen. Then I would sabotage it all. I would get my life back on track and I would be feeling great, then I would trick myself into rewarding my efforts with a drink, or the*

*notion I was somehow cured. After many trials and errors, the lesson of staying sober to keep things going well has become second nature. But now, my biggest anxieties come from when things are not going so well.*

*I now have some experience getting through some of life's little left hooks, like a pop-up expense, car troubles, irritating family members, and even something like a job loss. Mastery of staying sober while things are going well, or just pushing past the regular snags is one thing, but I don't know how I might handle a heavy hit. I'm unsure if I can be strong enough if someone close to me is dying, or if I become injured and can't do much but lay in a bed and take painkillers, or if I get sued and go broke, or if there is just a whole season of prolonged stress I can't do anything to resolve.*

*I fear I might fail after how far I've come. I'm just waiting for it, and I think my inner drinking demon is waiting to too. Sometimes I think this is too good to be true, that it's some big elongated joke and the punchline can come at any minute and catch me off guard, knock me off my square, and cause me to lose everything and start all over again.*

## Time Period: Present Day, and Sober

Yup, you're right, life doesn't stay smooth forever, but that's real life. It doesn't matter how pretty it may look for other people when we compare our life to theirs, brutal storms come for everyone.

Let's use that fear of failure to keep us in line, to keep us motivated. Let's use it to help us maintain our healthy routines and ties to solid people. This will get us through any shit storm while we continue to learn how to believe in a power greater than our ego.

Alone, we are not strong enough to get through the rough stuff. We are only human, and these tough blows are why humans are social creatures, because we need help. For instance, a hot news story about a catastrophic event rarely shows the real side of humanity. They love to show the bombs go off and all the devastation, but ignore all the volunteers, the giving and sharing, the hugs, the selfless rescues . . . the love. That's the real story. They may show bits and pieces of the kindness, but they will surely over bear that angle with the devastation.

The truth is, we are just a bunch of whiny bitches when isolated, by ourselves, solo. Our strength is amplified through each other, and dare I say, diminished when the devil catches us hiking the mountains of our mind alone. We can handle a lot, yes, but everyone has a threshold, a tipping point, and for some reason the "powers that be" get a kick out of testing our limits.

The strategy here is to prepare like a fighter training for a title match, or a soldier training for war. The battle might not happen for months or years, but the warrior knows one day it will, and they train their mind and body in preparation for when it does.

It's the only way to increase the odds for survival and winning.

Worry does not help; using the energy of worry as motivation to prepare (and not wasting it) does. Just the act of preparing takes away a huge chunk of the worry, because you are ready. It also helps to have an army of people standing behind us who are training for the same fight.

Nobody starts training for a fight on the same day as the fight. The fighter conditions their Self prior: working on strategies, visualizing wins, attuning their body, studying the enemy. And great fighters never train alone.

It's why attending those support meetings—which might seem redundant after a long period of sobriety—is still important. It's why our diet is still important. It's why maintaining our authentic relationships is still important. It's why limiting our consumption of lower frequencies like News broadcasts, gossip, and horror movies is still important. It's why getting the happy juices flowing from exercise is still important. It's why keeping a conscious connection to nature and all its energies is still important. These types of things not only help us heal and experience more joy in early sobriety, they also serve as a rock climber's safety harness when our resolve gets heavily tested.

It's imperative at this juncture that we shift our focus from *Not Losing* to *Winning*, from *Not Drinking* to *Improving our Health*, because that is what we want, that's the real goal. We are not necessarily trying to be sober; we already are, it's done! We were “not drinking” the day we stopped. Mission accomplished. What we want is to be healthier, to feel better and stay alive and sober longer, to enjoy ... well, everything we can. Sobriety might seem like a big deal to you right now, but ultimately, it's just a

small component of a healthy lifestyle.

Sometimes people get frustrated when they have tried so hard to *Not Drink*, then wonder why they continue to struggle with craving attacks and long-term malaise. The struggle happens when we hold the habit of focusing on what we don't want, because our focus only knows the subject we are thinking about. Our focus does not care about the modal verbs: shouldn't, can't, don't, stop, no, etc. It's only aware of the subject following those words. So, if you tell yourself, "I can't drink, no drinking, stop drinking, I shouldn't drink," your focus is still on drinking.

Let's say you want to lose some weight, and you have a slight candy addiction. You know that to lose the weight you need to eat a lot more carrots and celery, and less candy. You want the goal of weight loss, and you know the solution. Which should you be focusing on; candy (the problem), or carrots and celery (the solution)? Is the best plan of action to repeat the phrase, "Don't eat candy," all day, or is it to figure out how to get carrots and celery into your diet, keep it available, always have it around, and find fun ways to make it yummy (just like we did with alcohol)?

Some believe replacing the drug with support group meetings is enough, others take the doctor's advice and address these symptoms with different drugs or talking to a professional. This is folly and falls short. We must rebuild our life (or sometimes unbuild). We need to create a lifestyle that makes it easier to get through the day sober. But there is more to lifestyle than having a car, a house, a wife, a job, staying positive and eating clean.

If we want to truly kick our demon in the balls, we must continue to grow. There is no such thing as complacency, there is no such thing as stagnation. We are either growing or dying.



It's that simple. So, our best Defense against our addiction is to create an Offense based on the improvement of our overall health and wellness.

Health is a state of biological, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being. These four categories are not separate, each one affects the other. If one is ignored, it directly effects the whole system. (I'm talking holistic here). This constant influence on one another is why they must stay as balanced as we can keep them, lest we fall off the tightrope. These interwoven influences are why something like our diet or sleep quality can be detrimental, or astronomically helpful to our emotional states, and ultimately our sobriety.

The Biological aspect refers to our physical body: our weight, muscle tone, metabolism, genetics, sleep quality, what we eat and drink (the building blocks of our body), physical activity, oxygen levels, exposure to sunlight, PH balance (which is the measurement of how electrically conducive the liquid in our body is), toxicity, blood sugar levels, and so on.

The Psychology has more to do with our thoughts: how we mentally filter our reality, daily mental consumption (like what we are viewing on screens, reading in literature, the types of music we listen to, conversational topics, etc.), the states of mind we lean towards most, memories, our thought control, emotional management, our views, beliefs, tolerances, acceptances, awareness, insights, and decision-making processes.

The Social aspect refers to the people, places, and things around us—outside of us: our neighborhood, our paper-persona (like our job title, credit score, socio-economic status, religion, criminal record, awards, educational degrees, etc.), friends and family, workplace culture, community involvement, access to resources like healthy food and water and healthcare, and you get

the picture.

The Spiritual part is different for everyone, but it essentially boils down to our continuous and *conscious* connection and observation of the energies which bind and animate everything in this realm. “Conscious” being the key word here. We are always connected to the spirit, whether we are aware, or care, or not. But when we practice being conscious of it, feel it, adhere to it, and give it a little love and understanding—this signifies a relationship with the energy fields within and surrounding us. If you didn’t like that definition, how about “a relationship with the design of all things”. Or, for the more scientific folks, “being fully aware (researching) and considerate (analytical) of the relationship between the other three categories of health, bio-psycho-social.”

These categories create a sort of floating, chain-link loop suspended in water. If we pull on one link, the rest of the loop shifts. If we stick with poor dietary habits it affects our sleep. Our sleep affects our moods, which affects our interactions with people, which can affect our career, then finances, leading to more stress, and eventually back to the amount of addictive foods we impulsively reach for to make us feel better. See? All connected.

Here’s another one.

Let’s say we have a smokin’ hot girlfriend who likes to smoke crack, is diagnosed as clinically psychotic (the crazy ones often have a well-known special skill set), and sometimes doesn’t come home for a few days. Her behavior can affect our emotional health, our security, focus, sleep quality, and stress loads. This spills all over everything, and can result in immune system deficiencies, how many times we call in sick to work, our ability to pay rent, our relationship with our entire family, and our

moral compass. This combination can result in inadequate support systems, a landslide of triggers, and compromised sobriety. This example illustrates the affect that one person can have on our whole.

Let's do one more.

If we came to believe that money would solve all our problems, we may find ourselves working non-stop for educational merits and salaries. Although this type of obsession is socially acceptable, promoted, and positively reinforced by popular culture, it can cause us to sacrifice some of the more important joys in life, like quality time with loved ones, calmness, and simplicity . . . We may incur unhealthy circadian rhythms necessary for optimal health (like work/rest, eating/fasting, and left brain/right brain balances). Time management—like making space for support systems, close family, and spirituality practices—may become lacking. Ultimately, we can easily experience burn-out and become weak. How can we resist temptation when we are totally burnt out?

Now for a positive one.

If we take it upon our Self to improve something, such as sleep quality, we undertake certain tasks to practice it into habit. We might do things like turn off the Wi-Fi and read a book an hour before sleepy time to engage a mental unwind and not soak our Self in radiation all night. Refrain from grazing on unhealthy snacks before bed, which has secondary gains in the form of weight loss and level blood sugar. We might choose a consistent bedtime seven days a week, causing us to wake up early and refreshed, and adding an extra hour to the responsible “get shit done” part of the day.

Do you see how these little tweaks that one might make to improve sleep quality can influence other aspects of daily life?

This is a great “kill two birds with one stone” technique. But I haven’t even touched on what happens when you finally do get the proper sleep regularly. You get things like lessened anxiety, more energy and strengthened immunity, curbed inflammation (and thus reduced physical pain), improved memory and attention, and the list goes on.

This is the description of what happens before and after improving just one little, basic health component. Can you see how the benefits of improving this one, little health aspect might also affect the ability to remain sober as well?

Many inpatient and outpatient medical treatment centers for addiction use a similar bio/psycho/social health model—minus the spiritual part, although most programs have a spiritual component within them. While long-term, Western style treatment is often a great beginning to a sober life, the problem is that these treatments only scrape the very tippy top surface layer of the matters before the patient is discharged and sent out to fend for themselves.

They have a checklist. After physical withdrawal symptoms diminish, vitals return to a safe range, we get all the drugs to treat blood pressure, diabetes, or whatever they can find to prescribe for, get a pair of glasses if we need them, some food in our tummy, and maybe liver enzyme test—then our biological requirements are fulfilled (check).

After we get all our psyche meds, make a few appointments with the counselor or psychologist, tell them we feel better, that we no longer have the same uncontrollable cravings, and if we can refrain from doodling a picture of a man hanging himself on the depression screening questionnaire—we have fulfilled the psychological requirements (check).

If we have adequate arrangements for shelter/housing, that are absent of people using our drug of choice (most of the time), absent physical abuse, tell our counselor about support group meetings we plan to attend, assure them there are some responsible adults in our life who we could be accountable to (if we so desire), that we have found employment or legal means of income, and promise not to spend our weekends at a dope house—we have fulfilled the social requirements (check).

Then they put it in our records folder that they have provided educational materials, maybe some exposure to cognitive, or dialectical behavioral therapy, and all the bio/psycho/social health model requirements have been fulfilled. They have done all they can do (and they have), the treatment was a success (because we left the joint sober) and off we go.

Of course, that's not even the first mile of the marathon. We know these areas of health are much more involved than that. The real-life requirements for continued sobriety go much deeper than a checklist in a doctor's office. Therefore, your new mission in life is your health.

Let me uncomplicate all this health and wellness stuff. So, if our brain became rewired to think our drug was our survival essentials, and then the drug was taken out of the equation, but you still get mean ass urges or sneaky little cravings, wouldn't it make sense to provide the survival brain with these essentials in the best possible ways?

Could we calm the survival brain down if we provided it with the essentials it wants, and provided them thoroughly? If the brain had been tricked into thinking that our drug was food, water, air, sleep, and balance, do you think we could reduce the cravings if we provided our survival brain with the real thing?

Alakazam!

Did you catch that? Did you hear the last bit there? I will repeat it in a different way for you.

You never craved alcohol, or any drug. You craved what the drug took the place of, the real deal, the actual essentials. What you really want when you are craving a drug is hydration, nutrition, proper rest, balanced chemistry, and minimal toxicity battles within your body environment. (Damn! I'm gonna need to get more mics cuz I keep droppin' 'em.)

I know, it's confusing. Sounds almost too simple. It goes against what you've been led to believe this whole time. "It's the drug! The drug is the problem! Get rid of the drug and the problem goes away. . ." But what if it doesn't?

Welcome to Occam's Razor—keeping things as simple as possible.

We took our most basic, physical essentials for granted. We said, "I have water coming out of faucets, food in the fridge, plenty of air to breathe, a bed to sleep on, and I poop." But let me ask, do you breathe properly, drink pure water, eat fresh food in proper portions, sleep consistently well, have balanced chemistry, and are able to rid your system of waste efficiently?

You see, this is the crux of everything health and wellness, to get back to a natural and balanced state of being. This is how we facilitate healing, by reintroducing nature into our day, or get back to a more natural state.

Let me start with water. Seems simple enough. Seems like there's plenty of it around to drink. First let me describe what water is and is not. Water is water, but just because it's called water does not mean that it's just water. Our body wants real, natural, from the earth, unfucked with water.

This is the liquid our body was designed to run on, and we

are made of like 75% of it. Soda is not water, juice is not water, coffee is not water, tap water is not water! Let me explain the tap water thing first.

In America, municipal water supplies are processed, tampered with, there are things put in it that we do not want in our body. When municipal water gets to your faucet it has undergone a process that looks something like this. Step (1) Collection - usually from an already contaminated source near the city, full of waste. We know it's full of waste because, if it weren't, the following steps would not be necessary. Step (2) Screening and Straining to get the big stuff out. Step (3) Chemical Addition - sounds yummy. Step (4) Coagulation and Flocculation - interesting verbiage, looks like a good one to research. Step (5) Sedimentation and Clarification - let the nasties fall to the bottom and sweep them away. Step (6) more filtration. Step (7) Disinfection - which means add more chemicals like fluoride. You can take your first step into this rabbit hole by simply reading the warning label on your toothpaste and see what it says not to do with fluoride. And then there's the added chlorine, the same chemical added to disinfect swimming pools and burns your skin when there's a little too much. A good way to check this one out is to run a humidifier every night for a month with tap water, then take it apart and see how much white crud is caked on the heater core and filters. Step (8) Storage - probably in some large, hot-ass, metal container on top of a hill. Step (9), finally, Distribution - usually through miles of old-ass rusty funky pipes.

As you can see, tap water is not just water anymore. It won't kill you if you drink it, but it dang sure isn't good for you long-term, like hotdogs. Most bottle water is tap. They use tap in soda, coffee, and almost everything else you buy off a shelf or in a

restaurant.

Good water is not hard to find, and it's cheaper than all the above. If your favorite grocery store doesn't supply natural spring from a sub glacial aquifer in northern Minnesota, just look on the label for the word ozonation. Ozonation is the treatment process used by almost every single civilized country on the planet that's already banned the American water treatment style. It's much healthier.

I just gotta throw another little tidbit in here. If you have any kidney issues (which encompasses most alcoholics in early recovery) or hypothyroidism, you want to stay away from fluoridated water as much as possible. Okay I'm done with that one.

On to food.

Basically, it's the same deal we got with tap water. Not all food is real food, not after the manufacturer is done with it. (I'm going to interrupt myself here and say, I know you probably already know a lot of this stuff but bear with me because it all comes together in the end). So, we all know they add a bunch of shit, meaning chemicals, to the food (there are 30,000 different chemicals that a manufacturer can legally add to your food). They also grind it, strip it, turbo cook it, radiate it with microwaves to kill off all bad and good bacteria so it doesn't spoil on the shelf, which results in the loss of damn near all its nutritional value, and so on.

Basically, stick to one ingredient foods like fruit as much as realistically possible. An apple is an apple, that's its only ingredient. Then you got your veggies, nuts, and meat. Dairy should be minimized in your diet, but you can dig up the info for that one on your own. And we got the big one, the devil's cocaine, the most destructive substance in the universe, sugar.



All you need to know right now is that sugar is nothing more than a highly addictive and accepted and expected drug to use, and when you're hooked on it, you're on a sugar rollercoaster of subtle withdrawal and craving and short term satisfaction. Carby foods, that easily turn into sugar, and sugary foods, are called comfort foods for a reason. It's a drug, and one of the most widely abused ways for dealing with depression and anxiety. This sugar trap is dangerous because a sugar-level rollercoaster can be emotionally destabilizing, and eventually cause a craving for your drug of choice, which works better than sugar.

On to sleep. I don't know how many times I have heard someone say shit like, "I run just fine on 4-6 hours. I make up for it on the weekends. Ain't nobody got time fo sleep!" No, no, and no. We need real sleep and rest cycles. 7-8 hours, every single night we possibly can. This target sleep duration makes up for the one or two nights of bad sleep mishaps. We need to hit all four phases of sleep, like deep sleep and REM, without interruption from things like sleep apnea or crying babies. Get a routine, get a sleep analysis done, look up dietary factors; whatever you gotta do, do it to get better sleep.

Breathing. Many people stop paying attention to their breathing. How bad has your breathing become over the years? I'm not talking so much about the quality of air, although that is a big factor. I'm also talking about posture, depth of breath, expansion of lungs massaging internal organs, the calming effect of proper breathing and so on.

A stressful disposition can result in the habit of short and shallow inhales only being absorbed by the upper lung lobes and depriving the whole system of the essential nutrient called oxygen. But you can also easily flip it. Stress reactions can be reversed by mindfully breathing properly and fully.

Now on to homeostasis. It's often understood as body chemistry balance, but it's essentially referring to proper function of the whole system—it balances itself if allowed to do so. If you are unaware of how balanced your system is running, there are a few simple tests and things to look for. Pain is a good start. Pain is inflammation, and much like fear, we get used to it. When it gets bad enough, it's often believed there's a mechanical issue. There may be a mechanical issue, but the pain can be drastically reduced by decreasing inflammation. Ice is often used, but someone can also keep their chemistry in check with diet. A poor diet will keep the entire body in an inflammatory state; meaning, one can effectively treat pain with food.

Then you got your PH balance, which is basically a measurement of how well electricity can flow through the fluid in your body, alkalinity vs. acidity. Also, why minerals are important. Minerals are metals, and conductive. On a range of 1-14, healthy PH is considered between 7.35-7.45. That's a fairly sensitive range. All you need to do to test this is to suck, or pee, on a litmus strip and check the chart.

Then you got your blood sugar. If your blood sugar is too high or too low your mood changes along with it, like Joe Pesci in a Snickers commercial. To wrap your head around the importance of blood sugar highs and lows just ask a diabetic. Glucose meters cost about thirty bucks for the whole setup, and it's a good thing for anyone to track. You don't need to wait until your pancreas and kidneys are shutting down before seeing if this is in balance.

Now for the essential of excretion. Excretion is basically your body getting rid of toxins. Biproducts, and things that are not supposed to be in there. The body is designed to do this efficiently and naturally unless we get in its way with the habit of bombarding it. Fasting is a practice that allows our body to catch

up and process out all the bad stuff that shouldn't be in there. Fasting is when you stop gobbling down crappy food and drink all day and night. You want a break in there.

You don't need to do a multi-day starve or go on some special retreat to do this. The simplest, and most natural way is to not eat or drink anything but good water for 12 to 14 hours daily, a daily habit of when *to* and *not to* eat. For instance, eating dinner at about 6 p.m. and then not eating again until about 8 a. m., when one would typically eat break(fast). Get it? This allows the body to do what it was designed to do. Otherwise you're just bogging it down. Additional things to keep in mind are just making sure you have good digestive tract flora (probiotics), and not eating fake food full of toxic chemicals. Easy Peasy.

These are simple, easily manageable, basic, fundamental, and natural things to do. In other words, things that should have naturally, already been in place . . . if we lived in a perfect world. If these simple, basic, and easy to manage survival essentials are not addressed, the survival brain gets the alert that your survival is at risk, in the exact same way as when the drug was taken away, only a little subtler.

Malnutrition from continuous consumption of fake food will piss off the survival brain, as will chemicals added into the water that has also been leached of essential minerals the body needs for electrical conductivity, we all know how awesome it feels to get bad sleep, and so on . These types of things are the first craving triggers—no matter what else you are doing.

I wonder how off-kilter these things were before we started drinking and drugging? A better question might be, why are these things seemingly so hard to manage? What happened? How has so many of our natural resources been replaced with synthetic, artificial versions we are told are safe. Safe does not

mean healthy.

This is the big one that fucks with most people who are dealing with the frustrating belief that nothing is keeping them sober, especially the ones who entered a sobriety program with high hopes that it will work.

After trying so hard and doing everything they're told, they still experience cravings despite all their effort. They go to their meetings, do all the footwork with their sponsor, and they feel good while they're doing it. But then they go home and still experience the draw, the bottle keeps calling.

After a few weeks or months of this, one can understandably arrive at the conclusion that the program does not work. It's easy to silence Scaredy Cat's alarms with distractions, temporarily, but once the distraction is over, Scaredy Cat is still there, and he's pissed.

Now let's take a minute to check out Maslow's Hierarchy of Psychological Needs. Just pull it up on your phone, or whatever screen you have within arm's length, and look at the bottom tier of that colorful pyramid, then come back.

This hierarchical pyramid has 5 levels. At the bottom, the first, most important, foundational level that comes before anything else in the pyramid is the Physiological level. Beneath the word Physiological you may see a list: oxygen, water, food, rest, regulation, elimination. Does that look familiar?

The second level of the pyramid is Safety, third level is Belonging, up from that is Esteem, then Self-actualization. Each have a little descriptive list beneath their label.

The premise of Maslow's theory is that a person cannot satisfy any level without first fully addressing the level below. One can *attempt* to satisfy any level, but the effects of any progress will be

short-lived without the solid foundation of the level below. No level will stick without the level below it being locked in tight.

For instance, nobody gives a shit about their Safety level if they're starving. They will put themselves in harm's way to get food. Any attempts at Esteem are short-lived if that person is being physically, or psychologically, abused (Safety). The desire to reach one's highest potential (Self-actualization) is thwarted if that person has little Esteem.

See how that works?

Which level do you think a sober support groups falls into?

Yes, Belonging. Sobriety focused support groups are fantastic for satisfying this level of Maslow's maze. It will also help satisfy other levels like Esteem, and Spirituality (which can be placed in the Self-Actualization level), and maybe even a little of the Safety category if the group members can support them in their escape from abuse.

Which level can support group meetings not satisfy?

That's right. The survival essentials can only be fully satisfied by the person themselves. That's if they even know they're supposed to, or how to properly do it. I would like to add that support groups are almost always properly stocked with sweet snacks, coffee, and cigarettes. Just sayin'.

Brass tacks. The Belonging to a group doesn't mean much after that person leaves the meeting if their survival brain thinks the body is malnourished, not resting, toxic, dehydrated, and blah blah blah. The survival brain needs the basic survival essentials fully satisfied in order to level up—otherwise it's all a temporary illusion. For as long as these physiological essentials remain unsatisfied, the alcoholic will experience cravings for a drug to take their place because, thus far, that's the only program it knows.

While these meetings may help a recoveree stave off the urge to use the drug that day, they are ultimately used like a medication to suppress reoccurring symptoms which are rooted in the levels below, and the addict will continue to struggle with cravings and urges despite their participation in the program.

This goes the same for any of the higher levels of the pyramid. The cravings will persistently beat down the door, even you're financially secure, have a ton of friends, a satisfying job, health insurance, a great spouse, and everyone admires and respects you. None of it matters if you have not satisfied the essentials for survival in the proper way. (I know. I repeat myself a lot.)

The cravings will persist regardless, and you will continually need to take all the things that give you a temporary feel-good fix, like a drug (more, more, more). The things used for the temporary feel-good effect may or may not be for your drug of choice. Whatever it is, it may throw you off balance, so be careful.

If we already feel well and good, because we're taking care of basic health, and our system is healing and running properly, there isn't much need for all the extra stuff that's often used too much. There's no need to keep attending meetings three times per week for the rest of our life, because we already feel good, because we are getting back to running a system in the fashion it was designed for and not abusing it, bogging it down, and keeping it wanting.

But there is a flip side.

One cannot only take care of their physical health and ignore the obsession. They both must be tackled as simultaneously as possible.

I'm not saying the pyramid levels need to be done in the exact order. You wouldn't want to wait until after you lock down healthy eating habits to look for a job and housing. But, the

natural foundation of our health must be addressed, and it's just nice to snuggle and pet Scaredy Cat and make him purr while working on all the other stuff.

During and after you make these adjustments you will feel so good that there will no longer be a need to manipulate how you feel with drugs. Once started, it's a smooth reversion to how we were originally designed to function. The formula is simple: attend to the basic needs, admit an honest vibration of energy, and switch identity herds.

That's it.

That's the training format, and the big secret to combatting damn near everything we are dealing with. Get things back to as close to Natural as possible. It doesn't need to be perfect, simply better than it was, and almost all the other ailments take care of themselves. Yeah, not only will the cravings run for the hills, the bonus is that our other health problems diminish, or drastically reduce as well. Less health problems mean more comfort, and less need to use sorcerer's potions to get by.

What all this breaks down to is getting back to *what* we are. We almost forget that we are scientifically classified as part of the Animal Kingdom and designed to live with nature, yet we act as if Nature (both inside and out) is some sort of enemy. We continue to destroy it, ignore it, hide from it, bend it to our will, trash it, strip it, flip it, and deplete it.

After we consider this distortion of our nature, there's no wonder as to why that primitive portion of our brain detects things are amiss, why Scaredy Cat is freaking out all the time and triggering onslaughts of crappy feels and cravings.

Yes, consuming poisoned water and inflammatory foods will freak it out. Breathing improperly will freak it out. Lack of proper sleep will freak it out. Overwhelming stress will freak it out.

Extravagant debt will freak it out. Lack of sunlight will freak it out. Social Media and news feeds will freak it out. Put them all together, and what do we have? A Scaredy Cat emergency!

Okay, rant terminated.

Back to the Maslow's Hierarchy Pyramid thing.

The idea is to begin improving the basics to provide our physical body with everything it needs so it doesn't think we are lacking any survival stuff. Simple, huh? These basics can take a while to form into habit, so don't be afraid to jump between health categories (bio-psycho-social-spiritual), and Maslow's pyramid tiers.

We can skip the cookies (bio, food) that are offered at the support group meeting (psycho-social, Love and Belonging). It all interconnects unexpectedly, like the relationship of a horse and an apple tree. Horse eats apple—shits out the seeds that were inside the yummy fruit—seed is fertilized by the nitrogen rich manure it came out with—seed grows into big apple tree—horse eats more yummy apples.

As we continue to make these changes, a stable foundation for our wellness is cemented. This foundation strengthens our resilience to the boxing match with Life; and thus, to relapse as well.

It shrinks the spaces between the bars of the cage that're holding that little addiction monster at bay. After a while, we only need to check its prison seldomly when we can hear it crying like a little bitch in the background of our prosperity.

I know what you're thinking. "That's a ton of change. You're basically telling me I need to change everything. I'm having enough trouble with my drinking habit, let alone everything else. At least let me keep somethings that aren't good for me."



I know it's a lot to take in. We will need to welcome some discomfort and changes that we are unsure of. It takes a grand shift in priorities, and entirely different mindset. Sometimes we need to dump a career and change vocations for what's best for us (because something like money don't matter when you're dead). Sometimes we need to ditch a significant other, or a friend or two. Sometimes we need to let go of something that we hold onto tightly, like a belief such as, "I'm such a loser, I can't do anything right."

We start simple, with one small change. Integrate that change into a habit via a little repetition, and on to the next one. Some changes we will keep forever, and some will fade away. This consistent improvement is called Growth, but in order to create the big changes without burning our Self out, we must implement one specific strategy that makes no sense at all. We must keep our life simple!

The formula for keeping things simple is not that difficult when we take the time to sit down and align our psychic energy with our goals (a.k.a. planning.) Proper planning is a skill and an artform that has basic principles, which you can learn about in more detail in a book called *Simply Sober Workshop* by Simply Sober (shameless plug.)

To effectively keep things as simple as possible, we need to minimize distractions first. Have you ever met an old-timer who seemed to just not give a shit about much? It's not just because they're retired. We could tell him or her some chaotic story about our life, along with all our worries, and their only reply is, "yup", or "oh sweetie, give it a little time. Things will change for the better. Want some cookies?"

Why is that? To us, the sky is falling. To them, it is what it is. They have learned to pace themselves. They have seen so much,

worried so much, and exerted so much energy on worthless concepts that they have learned the difference between what to worry about, and what can wait; what is important, and what is hype; what is work that needs to be done, and what is just anxious movement; what is relaxation, and what is laziness; what they have control over, and what simply needs to play itself out.

This is sometimes called wisdom. In the case of the elder, maybe it's more energetic preservation (because now they have more limited reserves). However, that is exactly what we are trying to accomplish when we adopt a simpler life—conserve our energy so that we can focus it towards what is truly need.

Keep It Simple Stupid (KISS) is a popular saying among the AA's and many mystics from around the world. Sounds simple enough, and it is ... once we learn to apply it. Simple, but you will find that it's not easy at first. The general public is not trained by culture and society to function in this way. As you well know, it's quite the opposite.

We were conditioned to believe we must achieve “this or that” to be successful, and the social definition of success is what counts. This alone will batter down the majority's self-esteem, because if we weigh our worth on what others value, we will find our self on the hamster wheel running forever, never satisfied with how we think others view us, always trying to stay relevant.

We have been trained to always do more-more-more to improve some aspect of our life. We are relentlessly instructed: if you want to improve *that* then buy *this*, fit more of *this* into your schedule, work harder at *that*, try *this*, take *these*, stand on your head for twenty minutes while balancing coconuts on the soles of your feet every morning for thirty days and you'll be just fine. It seems that the solution to everything has always been to do more, drink more, take more, exercise more, work more, learn

more, more, more, more.

The notion to shed unneeded busyness and mental activity is overlooked. No one thinks of doing less to get the job done. The job is to get through the day without needing to medicate our disharmony. Maybe we need to do less thinking, less prophesizing, less digital streaming, less eating, less shopping, less working, less appointments, less talking, less escaping, less square footage ...

If we did less, what would fill that space? If we drank less soda, would something else take its place (like fresh, unadulterated water)? If we reduced our work hours, could something better fill that time? If we unplugged the internet, locked our phone in a metal safe, and turned our television screen towards the wall, what would replace the attention we payed to all that tech?

It's a tough seed to plant, that of doing less, thinking less, worrying less, wanting less. Most minds have learned—through so many generations of social engineering that it became ingrained in our genetics—that our self-worth is directly proportional to how productive we are, how busy we can be, all the activities we can fit into one day. Not only does this eerily resemble a slave mindset, it's the whole recipe for burn-out. And we know that burn-out is not conducive to sobriety.

Through a little conscious effort, we find a balance of what is and is not a priority for us. When it comes to sobriety, health is our priority. We put our health first, and make our decisions based off that. My health holds more weight than the temptation to have a few extra late-night laughs, or bringing the best presents to the holiday party, or staying with a lover that still does drugs, and so on. The health priority comes before Humpty Dumpty's desires, daily.

We ask our Self the tough questions. Is my health more

important than a social media worthy house? Do I need to attend three Thanksgiving dinners in one day? Do I need to be thinking about all these things right this minute? Do I need to fix that right now? Do I need to clean everything right now? Do I need to be staring cross eyed at my phone while I wait in this lobby, or can I take the next twenty minutes to wait in stillness? Do I really need to watch the News this morning like I'm searching for the next thing to piss me off? Do I really need to manage multiple sexual partners? Do I really need to calculate how much over-time it will take to afford that brand-new car with all the neat lights and buttons?

Scrape away all the excess, and the mind can level out, the body can slow down. Believe it or not, the mind does slow down when we stop overwhelming it. Where the mind goes, the body follows. And when *we* slow down, so does time, which helps with . . . shit, everything. No rush, no fuss. There's a larger window of time to look through, and thus, think about a halfway intelligent decision. Better decisions mean less mistakes. After some practice, we find this to be a much more effective means for relaxation and enjoyment than drugs ever were. And it helps with every single health adjustment we tackle.

## Tips, Tricks, and Hacks

Learn to say NO to people, and your thoughts. There's no need to over obligate, and you most definitely do not need to believe everything you think.

Pre-plan excuses to tell the people who try to pressure you into things you don't believe are in your best long-term interests. "No, sorry. I would love to stay later, but I need to be awesome tomorrow. Have a good night everyone. Buh bye."

Make two lists. On one, write down your priorities. On the other, write down what you routinely do each day, and how much time you spend doing them. Do they come close to matching?

Once upon a time, everything we did, thought, and said was designed around our priority of drug use. Now we bend everything around our pillars of health. The healthier we are, the less likely we will be to make unhealthy decisions. These habits gain momentum and become our nature.

## CHAPTER 10

### The Resistance

*If the voice I hear inside my head is me, then who am I talking to?*  
- Probably A. Meme

Time Period: Early Recovery, but Significantly Further Along.

*Staying sober is much easier now. I have a new formula. I use it, and it works. Now I have a different dilemma, one that I think was tied to my drug use in the first place. The thing is, I don't know what it is. It's more of a feeling, like I'm looking for something, but I have no idea what I'm looking for. The only way I can think of describing this feeling is like when you lose your car keys, like I'm stuck and can't leave my house, a sense that I'm fenced-in somehow, as if I'm an avatar locked into some video game and can't figure out how to get to the next level.*

*Granted, I've gotten much better at the level I'm playing on. I've developed the courage to go toe-to-toe with my past, present, and future. The fear of getting in the boxing ring with life has lessened significantly. Bobbing and weaving daily jabs and hooks*

*while landing a few of my own is a feeling I've never had before. The word Strength comes to mind, or maybe that I've found my manhood. Any which way, I am no longer feel like the scared little boy who wraps himself with a security blanket every time the boogie man straps on his gloves.*

*But I don't get it. I defeated my demons, jumped through all the hoops, learned how to fight, found all the traps, and completed the objectives. I continue to better myself and be a good guy; but for what, some cosmic karma points?*

*Don't get me wrong. I am more than grateful for all my blessings and the purpose my responsibilities bring to my esteem, but they all seem connected to something I don't understand.*

*It's as if there's a restriction, a pull, like I'm being stretched by opposite forces. It reminds me of a game in grade school we used to play called Tetherball. The game where there's a ball connected to a tall pole by a long, thin rope. The objective of the game is to get the rope to wrap entirely around the pole by hitting the ball around it in a circle, meanwhile the other player tries to get it to wrap around the other direction—when the rope wraps around entirely and the ball snugs the pole, you win.*

*But there's two forces at work. These two forces being the rope reeling the ball towards the pole, and an unseen force keeping the ball in flight and pulling it away from the pole as it gets whipped around. Then there's me, the ball, getting bashed back and forth, the best metaphor for life that I can think of.*

*Maybe I'm thinking too hard about it . . . and maybe I'm not. I know there's more beyond the rope, but I can't see it. I can't seem to get a view. I can't seem to establish a place where I'm at, like I'm this brush stroke in a huge painting and can't step back to admire whatever piece of artwork I must be a part of.*

*Maybe the masterpiece is none of my business, but then why*

*does it bother me? Why is there still friction in my emotional world no matter how good and clean my life is? Why do I feel surrounded by entities who all want a piece of my energy? Where is my freedom? Is there no purpose to my purpose other than being one less asshole in an ocean of buttheads? Why is there a constant river of things to do? Why can't I just "be"?*

*Maybe my player's turn is over in this game. If this is the case, then what? Am I to just try and teach the next generation how to navigate the same game level the best way I learned how? Am I supposed to keep pushing and pushing the days behind me until I retire? Am I to sit back and watch the infinite circus of society burn, then brag about how I somehow made it through the gauntlet?*

*No! I refuse this storyline. I've learned enough to know that I know very little, but I have also learned to listen to my world, and it tells me I am not just some speck of dust, I am not just some integrated circuit that decimates its mother-board.*

*My world gives me hints, synchronistic clues, too many coincidences to be mere luck. Some unseen force does have my interests in hand. Something tells me there's a loophole, a backdoor, that there's some sort of cheat code which will allow me to experience the hidden level I'm missing.*



## Time Period: Present Day, and Sober

How do you find something when you haven't got a clue as to what you're looking for? Hmmm. This is *the* big question, right? This is what everyone is searching for, the big fat cookie that will make our existence meaningful, worth the effort, make sense, comfortable, fulfilling . . . happy. Otherwise, what's the frickin point?

We've been searching for that big fat cookie our entire life. Hoping to find it in that job, that partner, that knowledge, that success, that possession; anything that will simulate what we have lost, that thing which will replace what became missing.

We were searching for it in our addiction, maybe we even felt like we came close to grasping it a few times. We were searching for it when we desired a person to love, or to love us back. We sought it through accomplishments, hitting one milestone after another, believing the whole time that the next one would fill the unknown void. We got even more clever and searched for it in psychology, religion, and spiritual practices; but neither our logical mind nor our angels divulged to us where the treasure was hidden (because it never was).

We searched for an answer to a question, a concept to hold onto, something we could understand. After a million attempts, we noticed a commonality amongst all our hunts for the big fat cookie, they were all taking place outside of us. We were looking for something as if we were separated. We were constantly struggling, fighting, signing contracts, and purchasing results with forces we had no business making deals with—all for the false promise of finding what was missing.

Certain entities, like business sales, understand that most

people are searching for something, so it's easy to provide a million things to take that something's place, especially when someone is unsure of what they need. We were sold the idea that we could use our will to create a life deemed fit by others, but it never satisfied our expectations. Yes, we got what we were told we wanted, but we expected to find something along with it, and it never seemed to be there.

Like modern science's largest flaw, we can observe how something like a plant grows, we can figure out a lot about how it works, but we never ask why. The answer to our dilemma hides inside the source of the question.

We never took notice of what was telling us there was something missing in the first place. It was a feeling, an intuition that had been hinting and nudging us with our emotional compass, making us feel differently when we got closer or farther away from that which we had lost.

But, if we can sense there's something missing, that we lost something, then we must have had it at some point. So, like when we lost our keys, we scrambled about, hoping to look under the last place we saw it (until we felt our pocket.)

If only we could understand it, if only we knew which key opened which door, then Humpty Dumpty would know what it is, then he would be comfortable with it. It would then be a tangible concept he could stand on, add it to his wall, and therefore accept it into his world.

We tried everything we could think of but were still left unaware of what we were being drawn to. Maybe that's it. Maybe it needs to be flipped. If this world is so inside-out and upside-down-ass-backwards, then an inversion makes sense. Maybe we need to become aware, more conscious, of the unthinkable. Yep, that sounds about right.

Buckle up buttercup. We're going for a ride.

First, we need to let Humpty Dumpty get a firm grip on what consciousness is (because he digs concepts). We hear about it often enough, "raise your consciousness", "Enlightenment", "Woke", and blah blah blah. These words are hollow, unless Humpty Dumpty can shake hands with what everyone labels as "consciousness". And this is exactly what we are about to do right now.

The existence of our own consciousness can be witnessed. This isn't all that difficult to do. After reading this paragraph, go ahead and close your eyes and visualize your home. With your mind's eye, notice the color of the carpet in your imagination. Is the carpet dirty, can you see the old stain next to the coffee table? Is the TV stand cluttered or dusty? Maybe there's a cracked window in one of the rooms. Visualize the couch, the bedroom, the exterior, the lawn, the driveway, where your vehicle sits—go on a mental tour of your home. Take a minute and do this now please, then come back after you're done.

Okay. Now, without saying it aloud, what's your name and age? In your mind, say, "My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old." Pay attention to the tone of the voice speaking. Do this now please, then come back.

Good. With eyes closed again, without singing aloud, let your favorite song play in your head for a minute. Do this now please, then come back.

Did you hear the melody, maybe the chorus, the beat, the singer's voice?

With only these few simple examples, you saw without your physical eyes, spoke without your physical mouth, and heard without physical eardrums. You may have even felt something, like an emotional tie to the memory of how that window got

cracked in the kitchen, or some frustration that sparked when remembering you need to fix something on your car in the driveway, or a sensation induced by your favorite song.

What about getting unexpected answers and messages, intuition? Have you ever had a dilemma, or question which had you perplexed for hours or days, only to have the solution spontaneously pop into your mind from out of nowhere when you stopped thinking about it? Emphasis on the, “when you stopped thinking about it”. I wonder where that message came from? Was it a subconscious conclusion derived after digesting a certain amount of data? Maybe. But Humpty Dumpty couldn’t figure it out, so where did the help come from?

Same as when you receive a strong feeling for the right or wrong way to go (acted upon, or not), like you just know you are getting cheated by someone, or entered a bad place, but you don’t have any data which would logically bring you to that conclusion? You just know, but you don’t know how you know. You seem to have another way of getting information other than what you can detect with ordinary senses.

I have already shown you that we have a huge tendency to focus our stream of consciousness on past events and future predictions. We can also focus it on the present moment. This means our consciousness can time-travel.

If we’re sitting in a restaurant, we can place our focus on two people who are sitting across the room having a conversation, maybe eavesdrop on what they are talking about. We can move the focus to our foot, feel the temperature of our sock, notice a pain in our ankle or an itch on our toe. This means our consciousness has no solid location. It floats to whatever grabs our attention.

How does one grasp the ungraspable?

To recap, our consciousness has no timeframe, no location, and doesn't need physical sensory organs to function. It does not reside within the organ we call the brain, but our whole body can receive its downloads for the brain to translate. According to the evidence, it functions more like a ghost than any physical *thing* we can comprehend. Some might call it a soul.

Great. Now Humpty Dumpty is aware he has a soul, but our soul is not aware of itself, it just *is* awareness, and it is always aware of what Humpty Dumpty is up to. Humpty Dumpty can become aware of what Humpty Dumpty is doing, thinking, and saying (both vocally, and self-dialogue) through Primo's eyes (present moment awareness being the gateway to the soul.)

The present moment awareness is Humpty Dumpty's backstage pass, the access to his mirror, the third eye rolled backwards. But what Humpty Dumpty needs to come to terms with is that Primo has a little secret. You see, present moments are happening all the time, even when Humpty Dumpty isn't thinking about them. Primo (soul) is always watching, listening, and knows every little thing about us.

Why does this matter? Because Primo is a snitch. She communicates everything we are doing, thinking, feeling, and saying to the great spirit which binds and animates everything in this realm. She does this via the energetic vibrations of our emotions born from our beliefs about ideas we are having.

It sounds hocus pocus, but everyone feels this invisible connection every time we walk into a room full of people. We can feel if something is wrong before we observe non-verbal cues that something is amiss. We often sense if people are in a good or bad mood, despite what they say, or if they're a good or bad person, or have good or bad intentions, just by entering their space. (We can feel it with anything, but we have stronger

connection to humans, because that's how we identify, usually . . . human.)

The side-effect of something like negative thinking is a low mood. That mood resonates at a certain frequency which vibrates throughout the whole person (chemical-electrical impulses radiate an aura and is measurable by modern devices.) This vibration pulses outward to the physical world, and the world of that person harmonizes to their specific frequency.

You don't harmonize to your external world. It harmonizes to you. It's always harmonizing to you and your state because everything is always everywhere, it's just a matter of what you're noticing.

In other words, if you stub your toe first thing in the morning, then get all pissy and begin to tell yourself that you're angry and it's going to be a shitty day, the odds are increased that it will be a shitty day if you stay in that mood.

You are looking for it, expecting it, and noticing every little shitty thing to validate your belief, then transmitting a signal to the world's all-connected energy field that you want more of it. By the time something good does come along in your day, you pay it little attention because you are dead-set on staying the way you told yourself you are.

Primo is connected to the Source, the unseen world from which everything in the physical world is created. Everything in this world is energy and vibration. This has been well known throughout the world for ions and can be easily observed when a baby is soothed by a lullaby or bounces around to an upbeat jam before they can even walk. And those examples are only the audible vibrations.

This knowledge surrounds us, even metaphysical memes on the internet can teach us this much. I'll admit, internet memes

are not the most scientific approach, but for some reason, many of the sayings simply resonate with our core, despite them only being a thought coded in words.

Science nerds (the smart guys and gals) have even told us that the material world is nothing more than a very persistent hologram, and the smallest building blocks (atoms) which create our world are composed of nothing more than empty space, energy, and frequencies (mind, thought, and emotion.)

You getting it?

This energetic field is what Primo talks to, not because she has the latest cosmic smartphone, but because our thoughts and emotions are the exact same energy as everything else, it's just flowing through us. On this level we are not separate from our environment at all—same stuff. The reason why people pray is to focus this energy. Their Humpty Dumpty is asking the unseen Source for something, via Primo, and this action seems to be very natural for everyone, even if it's not in the posture of a formal religious request.

Before we go any deeper, let's try another angle.

Our mind is dyadic (split). It wasn't always this way. Our mind was whole when we first began stumbling around this world as tiny children, but as we became more integrated within the systems of the material world, we needed to divide the mind to function better in the physical arena (two minds, two worlds, both connected.)

One of these minds we might relate to as the Talker (Humpty Dumpty), and the other is the Listener (Primo).

Overtime, Humpty Dumpty was employed so much that he became the default setting for our operating system. As society provided a plethora of answers and instructions: curiosity, imagination, intuition, and emotions were lost, discredited, and

battered to a bloody pulp.

We do need Humpty Dumpty—a personality to interface our mind with the physical world—but the problems lay with the fact that he’s naturally programmed by our experiences and has been taught, through experience, to only experience the physical world as detected by our five senses, and that the *material* is the only thing that exists. He had become conditioned to only think and discern all ideas based on what was presented to him, and eventually came to believe we are what he thinks.

This information he’s using can, and has been, easily manipulated through various social programs. These programs can easily go haywire when they contradict our Natural state too much: inner-conflict, mental illness, unorthodox consciousness punishable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by chemical jailing.

This happens more often than we are aware of because we are always building psychic immunities, but never shedding the unneeded ones when they are no longer needed. What we are left with is a big pile of paralyzing lessons, some still waiting to be learned.

Humpty Dumpty is a basic bitch, and this is how he works. He says, “When I do (feel, or think) \_\_\_\_\_, past experience (including: personal experience with the real world, repetitive messages, what we’ve heard from a third party, what we read in a book or article, were taught in school, saw in a movie or show, and so on) tells me \_\_\_\_\_ will happen.” And that’s it. That’s how he works. And so, he thinks he’s a damn fortune teller.

Humpty Dumpty is like a know-it-all teen. But, because he is programmed by society and mostly uses words, none of his thoughts are his own. His entire existence has been blanketed by repetitious lessons and fear-based emptiness fillers.

For example, the only way Humpty Dumpty knows that we



love someone is when we fear losing them. This is not good. The way Primo knows we love someone is, when we are with that person, all fear disappears.

So back to the big fat cookie question. What are we looking for? What are we missing? What got disconnected? What had we lost? Simple, Humpty Dumpty took full command of the body vessel and buried Primo in a coffin (along with our shadows,) then ignored her, talked badly about her, took her for granted, and resisted her love. He forgot she has access to an energy source that's more intelligent, kinder, and wiser than he has the capacity to be—because he's limited.

All we need to do is remember she exists. She exists in stillness, when Humpty Dumpty shuts his mouth. We remember she's there, that she's always been there, and that we are swimming in the energy field she is made of at any given moment. We need only realize we have a relationship with her, and if we've become friends, our ego can consider advice from a power greater than itself.

With this one simple concept, simple acceptance that our thoughts are not everything, that our thoughts are not us (we only thought they were), we realized what we truly are, the awareness of our thoughts.

And through this awareness we find a Will behind what we once believed was our own; that we are designed to be consciously aware of our connection to the grand designer, and that we were only split from it by a fragment of our imagination, a material illusion.

Now we can get out of its way, and let it heal us with no more effort than allowing a single breath to open the gates and allow a loving energy to nourish every aspect of our life. It's within this awareness we find simplicity at its finest.

The funny thing is, we could have been healed of our perceived ailments from the very start with this simple realization. (Simple to do, not so simple to explain). We had plenty of opportunities. Some call them moments of clarity, like when you were all fucked up and whatever you had been doing suddenly comes to light. The way out comes to light, the motivation to do so is also there, but it's often shut down by the next morning.

For those who were able to hold onto one of these great moments of epiphany, they may call it an Awakening. Not an awakening of the soul, for the soul is always awake, but an awakening of Humpty Dumpty to finally accept the responsibility for his connection to the spirit, and his decision to work in tandem with her. This is also known as Oneness, the merging of the two minds.

All that's required is for Humpty Dumpty to join forces with our soul, let a little love in, and use some of that wisdom to make better decisions. When we can shovel the old programming out of the way, we don't need any books, legislation, heroes, or idols to make a moral decision, it doesn't need to be taught.

When Humpty Dumpty takes more advice from the universal energy he is guided effortlessly in his decisions. He begins to change the way he acts. He buys less waste. Stops polluting his body. He chooses higher paths. He is not as self-serving. And most importantly, he learns he can trust this universal energy more than himself.

It's all about the trust.

Faith is trusting in a process that we can't understand while we go through it. Faith is trust in the results, regardless of whether they match our expectations or not. Trust is something which takes a little time and evidence for Humpty Dumpty to

achieve. His challenge is to trust that Primo might be right more often than himself, that our programming might be faulty, that we may have been infested with a pandemic virus called the human condition.

When we so choose, at any given moment, the two fragments of our mind can become one. This Oneness is the loophole. When we merge our thoughts with the unthinkable, the ungraspable, the energy that is us, we have invited the greatest of all power into our life. This relationship demands a certain respect. A level of respect so high we allow it to wield us, and not the other way around. (There are very undesirable consequences that come with trying to bend reality to our will—kind of a “be careful what you wish for” type situation.)

We could have begun our healing journey with this simple trust, and life would have been much easier. What a bummer. But it wasn’t a total waste. It’s all part of the refinement process.

We had never met a single person who has had an Awakening that stuck for more than a day or two. What usually happens is the suffering continues, until nothing works to fix it. The problems persist and worsen. Patchwork (material world) fixes no longer hold. The pressing pain increases to a threshold where the walls that Humpty Dumpty built his empire upon can no longer sustain its illusionary structure and it crumbles beneath his feet. It is at this point—when he lay there battered, bruised, and broken in a million pieces—that he realizes none of his thoughts and ideas and concepts can rebuild him the same as he once was. He can’t go back. He no longer wants to be who he once was because who he became was how he fell. So, the only way to get back up off the dirty ground is by grasping the hand of an unthinkable power and watch what it can do in his life, because whether he totally trusts it yet or not, he already knows

it can't do a worse job than he was doing.

Enough with all the mushy stuff. What's the point? How do we use this? Is any of it practical? Fair enough questions.

If we deny there are other forces at work in our world beyond our own thoughts it means we need to do all the work. We feel the need to control that which cannot be controlled by us. How disheartening.

With each deflated expectation, failed fix, misled emotion, and excessive energy drain—we became weak, less authentic to our Self and everyone around us, more toxic, more desperate, and sick. After extensive experimentation, we finally figured out that no person, place, or thing can heal what we have. We can only allow what *we have* to be healed by our design(er), which is easier than we thought because we're already designed to heal. It's in our coding.

When Humpty Dumpty gets it through his thick-ass shell that he has strayed us so far off from our Natural state of being, that it's actually his fault the sickness continues and worsens, and that he doesn't hold the technology to fix it—only then can he let go of the throne. He has no choice but to shut up and listen and learn new things from a non-human source (for once), from nature, from life in general. Some call this Humility.

When he develops more potent questions and critical thought, he can better filter which problems are real and fake. When the fake problems disappear, he can relax a little. When he lets a portion of the real problems just be, he then sees how many simply take care of themselves, and he can relax a little more. After most of the things he once worried about are no longer an issue, he has more energy and creativity and strength to take on what he needs to change.

This results in a clearer, less busy mind. He can see some things need far less attention (if any), and maybe other things more. He lets himself *be* (a Human Being). He lets his own design take over. He ceases his participation in the less natural avenues of life. Inherently knowing we are not built for all the modern-day excesses, he begins to cut bacon (trimming the crap we don't need; but oh, it tasted so good). Inherently knowing we were not built for the amounts of psychic attacks; he trims those as well. Everything begins to resemble a natural way of living (as close as he can realistically get it, anyway).

The body, mind, and soul love this stuff. They can easily relax and enjoy themselves in this state.

Here's the scientificy part.

As described above, when we learn to rely on the unthinkable—by knowing we have access to Source at any time—we can then relax and our entire being enters a state called the parasympathetic nervous response. This is the state of relaxation, the healing state where cells repair themselves, regenerate, tissues rebuild (themselves), energy is restored, and so forth.

There is another state, I think I mentioned it before. The opposing state to relaxation is called the sympathetic (fight-or-flight) nervous response. As we get older, and Humpty Dumpty started pushing things around, we stayed in this state for longer periods of time.

While the state of fight-or-flight is awesome if we need to defend against an angry tiger or are dangling off a cliff ledge with one hand, it is most definitely not a state we want to stay in long term because, in this state, all our stress chemistry is flowing through our system (bad homeostasis).

It's all for protection, and it's a state triggered by fears. Strong

or weak, intense or subtle—while in this stress-state our cells are degenerating, our emotions are vulnerable, our energy is draining, our thoughts can be more easily controlled by promises of relief, and our love is stifled.

Bottom line, the parasympathetic nervous response is our natural state, the sympathetic nervous response is a defense mechanism we had become conditioned to live in almost all the time, but it was subtle, we got used to it. The fear became comfortable, and it was killing us.

Okay, I'm done pussy footing around.

I am going to come right out and say it.

The only way to defeat fear is with love, and the war in heaven between good and evil is fought on the battlefield of our consciousness, our stream of thoughts.

Negative experiences, thoughts, and perceptions accumulate within, and grow into what we call the shadow self. It's called this because it's are darker side, and it follows us everywhere, whether we want to acknowledge it or not. It lives in the darker parts of our psyche, and there's only one way to make a shadow disappear. Shine some light on it. Do you know how exhausting it is to run from your own shadow? Of course, you do. You've been doing it for decades, using any distraction you can find.

With this illumination we can now delete old ego programming and disengage the autopilot reactions to uncomfortable stimuli. We can experience more of the sweet serene paradise of a consciousness that is no longer under attack every time we open and close our eyes without a distraction nearby.

This is skill that does require us to unlearn much of our conditioning. Why hasn't this stuff been taught to us? Why have most not been taught how to know *thyself*? It's because this solid

dimension of lower vibration, this denser, material realm we are brain-washed to believe is the only place we live in is ruled by The Dark Prince (or opposition).

You know who I'm talking about.

Most of the lessons we are taught (by most human teachers) takes us further away from these higher connections and, dare I say, divine understandings.

All the chaos, all the distractions: movies, educational indoctrination, apps, conspiracies, mediums of medication, never-ending news reels and supplies of gossip, the push to have everyone working ungodly hours, pursuits of prestige, and general busyness are for only one purpose. The evil "powers that be" never want us to ask the big questions. Is there something more? How am I connected to it? Who am I? What am I?

If we don't seek the answers it leaves us to rely on whatever seductive entities holding the most power in the material world would have us comfort our exploited instincts with (the beast system)—the quick-and-easy, feel-good fixes. The killers disguised as our saviors. Of course, our conditioning is strong, and cleverly pounded into us since birth.

We can have all the good intentions in the world, but if we don't begin to gain control over our emotions (which sprout from the soil of our thoughts and bloom into our reality with whatever vibration we are resonating at) we're fucked, and our fixers will always be able to wield us.

How do we do this? How do we fight such a battle?

Time to download some mental Judo.

Once again, we find a nice quiet place. Take some long deep breathes. We use our diaphragm to expand our lungs towards our pelvis, move the air downwards to expand our belly, and refrain from using our upper chest and shoulders. We place-hold our

attention in a space underneath the swirling thoughts in our mind. A point positioned directly in the center of our skull works well.

Our thoughts scurry about, as if they were people walking on a busy street above, and we let them do their business and go where they need to. We simply sit still, focus on the breath, watch the activity above, and accept the thoughts existence without judging whether they are good or bad—that they’re just there.

Remembering we don’t need to get involved at this moment, we just watch.

Eventually, one of those thoughts is going to stop, reach down, and pull us up from our silent observance and onto the sidewalk of the hustling and bustling street. This thought does not seem to want to simply pass with a breath. It mirrors our side-steps as we try to go around it. We don’t like this thought because it makes us feel uncomfortable and it won’t go away when we tell it to.

The problem arises with our belief that this thought is attacking us. We try to keep it at arm’s length. We try to push it away and fight it, but this uncomfortable thought will not tire before we do, because it is a part of us. It’s not going anywhere. Even if we block it with another distracting thought it will just come back tomorrow or the next day, like a gang of bullies around the corner on our way home from school.

This thought is an energy that merged with our matrix. Whether we like it or not, whether it was something we did, or something that happened to us, the thought—and our emotional attachment to that thought—is within us.

This often happens when we try to quiet our mind. We usually reacted to this type of thought by running from it, replacing it with more comfortable distractors, or we just quit



our attempted stillness altogether and resume our busyness in the physical world.

There is only one way to defeat this type of enemy. We must embrace it. We let it in, fully accept its presence, and willingly feel every emotion that comes along with it: the pain, the disappointment, the anger, the hate, the regret, the worry, the doubt. When this technique is applied, we have that bullying thought in a headlock. This hug of tolerance is the headlock for that thought, and once we control something's head, we can basically make it our bitch.

When we give this "enemy" love, in the form of this hug-lock, by accepting its presence with simple awareness, we are quickly amazed at how it immediately loses all power. It's almost aggravating to learn we could have done this at any time. The bullying memory, or neurotic prediction transforms and becomes **just a thought**, less of a threat, and it will gladly leave our consciousness and go along its merry way.

Then we get to return our focus to our breath, and rest again beneath the busy crowd of our thoughts with a new understanding of what we believed was our enemy.

If we are patient, if we can stick with the boredom until it becomes comfortable, if we sit still long enough, the busy crowd in our mind will thin out and we can experience some real peace. This takes about thirty minutes.

The bad thought is not gone forever, we didn't kill it. It will pop in again someday. But the next time it comes along it will pass on the other side of the street. The uncomfortable thought(s) will lay in wait for when we are overwhelmingly distracted again, for when we are exhausted from wrestling with other thoughts and constructs of the physical world. It will wait for when we forget we have instant access to peace and divine energy. It will

seize these moments and jump in to gang up on us. All these types of thoughts are fought with the same Judo, by letting them in and giving them the hug-lock. It makes no difference how many there are.

Here's my favorite Judo form, the one you will learn, the one I use often. My goblins sometimes like to march down the street and surround my mind when I try to go to sleep. When all the lights are off, everyone in the house is knocked out, and I'm alone with my eyes closed, that's when they like to come.

There's the initial battle, as I resist their faces pushing into my imagination. Then I get sick of it. I center and spread my mental arms wide, exposing my chest and say, "bring it on fuckers," with full intention of letting these menacing thoughts have their way. I let them come.

Every time I remember to do this, without fail, this is how the goblins react. "Hey! Where did he go?"

With a little practice, all the lies of past and future lose their power, and we are only left with the truth. This is the mental magic which buys our freedom, but there's only one way to wield this type of magic. A sacrifice is required, but not just any sacrifice. A big price must be paid, as with all great magic.

The price for true freedom is something we held onto very dearly. We kept it close to our heart. It's something that we had killed for with our compliance. It's something that surrounded us, something which had been purposely enmeshed into every nook and cranny of our life. We reinforced its presence daily. We constantly looked for it and fed it with our attention. We constantly consumed it. We payed money for it. We couldn't seem to get enough of it. It was our greatest distractor, entertainer, and motivator. It was something we had grown so accustomed to, so attached to, we didn't know what we would do

without it. And no, I am not talking about our drug of choice.

The requirement for this magic—the magic which enlightens our decisions and allows us to channel the creative energy of love that enables us to heal and change our life—is the sacrifice of our beloved Fear.

Now do you see? We were tricked into worshipping the wrong master, like a slave who doesn't know he's a slave.

Once we can see with new eyes, it's easy to get through all the lies. We found what we were looking for when we maintained our relationship with the power we were created from. It wasn't a *thing* at all, it was everything.

We don't need to think about it, or understand it, or control it. It's a relationship of attention. Isn't that what everyone wants in a relationship? Attention. We simply allow our two minds to watch and listen and speak to each other. As the relationship strengthens, they merge. We become more interested in watching our thoughts than the thoughts themselves. We are not our thoughts. We are the awareness of our thoughts, and our awareness is what's connected to everything in our world.

When this merge happens, we become a natural and authentic human being with a soul, and not an assembly-line version of what we bought with our participation in Fear.

We found our enemy and our savior. They were both here the whole time, just finding ways to reunite. With this natural transition, God becomes you, not the other way around, and we can then live within what we truly are. In doing so, our personal will becomes null and void.

The rope which tethered our ball to the tall pole felt comfortable because it controlled our flight as we whipped around an artificial world that had been presented to us by man.

We eventually chose not to abide our conditioning and trusted that, when we cut the rope from the pole, we would land where we were supposed to.

If we landed in a puddle, maybe we needed to be cleansed. If we landed hidden beneath a bush, maybe we needed to be alone. If we landed in a busy street, we had faith the heavy vehicles would go around. If a bird shit on us, it added the weight to roll a different direction. And if we landed in an open field under the hot sun, maybe it was so The Child could see us more easily, and cherish the finding of something long lost, a renewed joy.

## Tips, Tricks, and Hacks

Warning: Do not misconstrue what I am talking about with meditation. There are certain forms of meditation that are purposed to clear the mind of all thoughts—to dissolve the ego. This is dangerous because it subverts all our natural psychic defenses, which were put there by design. We need them on some levels. If this natural psychic immunity is totally eradicated, even for a moment or two, it creates a vacuum and can allow unwanted energies to bubble: residual, undealt with, and harmful energies to arise that we are not prepared for.

Another Warning: When you pray, cast spells, visualize, do rituals, focus a wish, or whatever you want to call your request to the universe, it is of the utmost importance that you are asking your own awareness for it. Only ask your soul, your own connection, your own middleman for the things you desire to manifest in the physical realm. Do not engage or ask idols, charms, gems, gods, elements, ghosts, demons, or angels of any flavor for any favors.

If you do this, you are making deals with forces you have absolutely no business fucking with. You are opening yourself up for attack. Half of these “helpers” hate you, and the other half resent you for subduing them to your personal will. Both will give you what you want but will sabotage your life in other ways. You end up fixing one problem, and three more pop up. Now they have a repeat customer, and you can be easily led to a dark place this way. Only make requests to your own energetic connection, and this changes you, which changes your circumstances.

We can never fully understand the power that we are a part of, and we don't need to, but we can try to observe how it relates and influences us and our surroundings. This helps us appreciate the design of all things, which was how science came about. Back in the day, people were so enamored with the awesomeness and intelligence behind of how nature was designed they were simply drawn by curiosity to know more. Hence, the scientific studies.

If you can, go pluck a leaf off a tree, or maybe pull one up on a screen. Look at this little thing, there are millions of them everywhere. So insignificant, so easily taken for granted.

But look closely. Its physical appearance is like artwork, naturally beautiful. Think about what it does. That little insignificant thing is designed to be a bio-solar panel. It literally has the technology within it to take sunlight and turn it into a usable nutrient for the large tree it's attached to.

Let's follow that.

The leaf is attached to a magnificent tree. Home to a hundred creatures: bugs, moss, fungi, birds, squirrels, and a range of other animals. It provides shelter and food for many, not to mention the air all animals breathe. It might be a hanging spot for a beehive, whose bees pollinate a nearby garden. When the owner of the garden takes a big whiff of the flowers and exhales, that air feeds the tree.

This tree communicates with other trees via its roots and fungal systems (they talk). They nurture sick brother and sister trees. They grow around obstacles, break through concrete, and hang off cliffs. And when the leaf dies and falls to the earth, it decomposes and becomes the soil for the roots of the same tree.

All this awesomeness (keeping in mind that humans only recently figured out solar panels, not to mention we haven't

figured a way to build a single blade of grass from scratch) and it all started from the instructions stored within a tiny little seed, just add dirt and water. Mix some decent conditions along with some divine energy, and you have a thing of beauty with a huge purpose.

The biggest trick we fell for was that we needed to be fixed in some way. We don't. The "broken" belief was one of the main reasons we began medicating with our drug of choice in the first place. Once this lie is exposed, we can be Natural once again, and the rest takes care of itself. We may need to relearn a few things, and we may need to relocate from an environment we became sick in but getting back to a more natural state is much like riding a bicycle, we never really forgot.

You, my friend, were not broken. You were sick. You caught an illness from an orchestrated disconnection between your mind, body, and soul. It was not your fault. You had no choice, but now you have the ball.

Enjoy the ride my friend! Good things will happen, and bad as well, often at the same time. The choice is your which you pay more attention to and expect more of. I know you will do just fine.

SIMPLY SOBER

THE END



